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TRAVELS

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA.

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TRAVELS

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA,

BEING

A JOURNAL

OF NEARLY

THREE YEARS' RESIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY.

TOGETHER WITH

A Sketch of the History of the Republic,

AND

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, COMMERCE, ETC.

BY

ROBERT GLASGOW DUNLOP, ESQ.

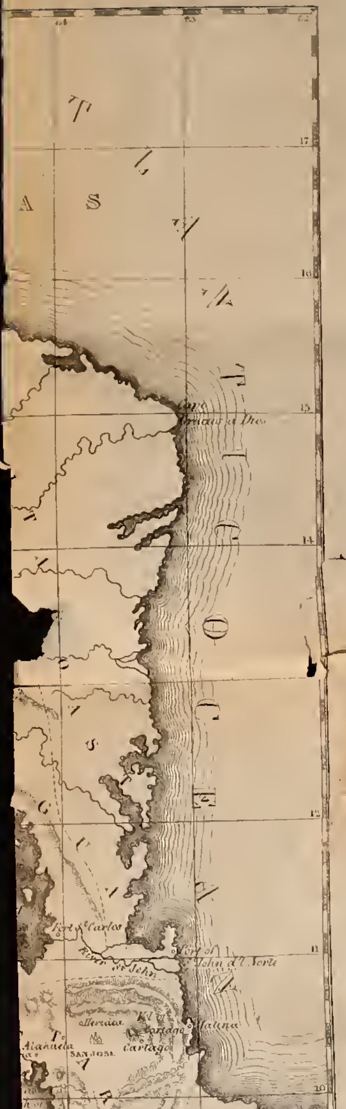
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1847.



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PREFACE.

The object of this work is to furnish the English reader with some trustworthy information respecting Central America, a portion of the world almost unknown in England. It consists chiefly of extracts from the Author's private journal, and contains a brief sketch of the history of the Republic of Central America, from its origin to the present time; together with an account of the most remarkable phenomena and productions, and the present state of its society, agriculture, and commerce. During its completion the Author had not at hand any of the works which treat of Central America; but this is the less to be regretted, as the only publications he has seen relating to it were merely notices of hurried travels through the country, which, while abounding with palpable inaccuracies, contained no statistical or useful information of any description.

Guatemala,
December, 1846.

The last sheet of this work had scarcely passed through the press, when intelligence was received of

the Author's death. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to give a sketch of his short but eventful career; but a few words may be permitted to the Editor, and may be not without interest to the reader.

Robert Glasgow Dunlop was born at Seafield, near Ayr, in August, 1815. He was the seventh and youngest son of John Dunlop, then third surviving son of John Dunlop of Dunlop, and consequently a grandson of Mrs. Dunlop, the first kind patroness of the poet Burns. After enjoying the usual education afforded by a Scotch parochial school, he joined the London University, and made great progress in the study of Latin and Mathematics. His fondness, too, for History, Poetry, and Classical Literature was extreme, and so great was his power of application, that he found leisure to attain considerable proficiency in Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, and other branches of science. His academical studies over, he entered a mercantile office. He soon transferred the same zeal and acumen to his new pursuit, and, after a short initiation into business in London and elsewhere, he eventually repaired to Guatemala.

* * * * *

From early boyhood he studied and was intimately acquainted with the Bible, and, though fondly attached to the Presbyterian faith, in which he was educated, he could sympathise with all who read and obeyed the word of God. Though reserved, and too nervously sensitive to allow his feelings to be scanned by the rude or careless, his heart expanded

in love to every object of creation; and the love of truth, which characterised him even in infancy, continued to be cherished by him in manhood, and must stamp a value on the pages now given to the world. Repeated attacks of fever, common to the country in which he had made his home, severely tried his always delicate constitution, and after a month's illness he expired on the first of January, 1847. He is the sixth of seven brothers who rest in a foreign soil.

London,
18th June, 1847.

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TRAVELS

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE FROM GUAYAQUIL AND ARRIVAL IN CENTRAL AMERICA. — DESCRIPTION OF THE PORT OF THE UNION. — VOYAGE TO NACASCOLO. — DESCRIPTION OF OLD AND NEW CHINENDEGA. — LEON AND REALEJO. — SUGAR AND INDIGO ESTATE OF DON BERNARDO VENEREO. — RETURN TO NACASCOLO. — ASCENT OF THE VOLCANO OF COSIGUINA AND DESCRIPTION OF ITS ERUPTION IN 1835. — SAN MIGUEL. — ACCOUNT OF INDIGO GROWING. — PORT OF REALEJO, WITH NOTICES OF THE CANAL OF NICARAGUA.

On the night of the 14th of March, 1844, we embarked, at Guayaquil, on board the brigantine Augustina, bound for Central America. At daylight on the following morning the pilot came on board; we got up the anchor, and, having a fine run down the river, passed the pilot station at 4 P. M., where the pilot left us. We here saw the wrecks of two vessels, one the Colocolo, belonging to Mr. G. of Valparaiso, the other a French vessel; both were lost at the entrance to the river, in smooth water. The first (as I was told by two seamen whom we took on board belonging to her) was purposely run on the

rocks in a fine day, and the master refused to accept the assistance of two pita balsas, choosing to leave on board a large quantity of specie said to have been taken in at Masatlan in Mexico. The French vessel was also said to have a large quantity of specie on board, which was all lost in a similar manner; but the master, who was previously considered a needy man, some time afterwards appeared in Lima as a man of fortune. It is shrewdly conjectured that, in such cases, the specie is rarely taken on board, but left at Masatlan with some accomplice, the boxes being filled with stones for appearance.

Our passage from Guayaquil was most tedious, the winds being light and mostly contrary, the heat excessive, and the deck of the schooner so lumbered with spars and bamboos, taken on board at Guayaquil, that there was not room to move. My fellow-passengers were two Spaniards, very quiet and harmless people, submitting to all the insults of the master without a murmur. The crew was a most motley assemblage, being composed of six or seven nations, including two Englishmen and one North American.

On the 24th we came in sight of the island of Coco, but could see nothing but a fog, as it rained heavily, which it had done for more than ten days: the heat, too, was excessively oppressive, and the miserable little box of a cabin so insupportable, that I preferred keeping wet on deck. To crown our discomforts, the fresh provisions were gone, and we had to live on biscuit and half-rotten North American beef and pork for the rest of the passage.

On the 1st of April we were, by dead reckoning

(there being no chronometer on board), close to the entrance of Conchagua Bay, but we did not sight land till the following day at sunset, when a volcanic peak was faintly seen in the distance, which the master decided to be that of San Miguel, though it must have been that of Viejo Chinendega, as we steered towards it all night, and at daylight found ourselves in the middle of Conchagua Bay, nearly opposite Realejo. About 10 A. M. a smart breeze sprung up dead ahead, and tacking about all day, we had at night only gained a few miles. The scenery around the Bay of Conchagua, and the entrance to the port of the Union, is wild and magnificent in the extreme, no fewer than nine volcanic mountains being at the same time visible. None are at present smoking, but four, namely, Cosiguina, famed for its eruption of January 1835, supposed to be the most terrific ever recorded in any part of the world; San Miguel, every few years in violent action, and San Salvador and Ninderi, may be considered as active volcanic vents, though the two last have now been quiet for some centuries. The rest, namely, Antigua, Chinendega, San Vicente, Tigre Island, San Lorenzo, and Conchagua, are what may be termed extinct volcanoes, there being no tradition of their having broken out, though there exist abundant proofs of there having been an eruption within the recent geological period. At 10 P. M. we anchored at the entrance of the bay of the Union, called also the inner bay of Conchagua, to wait the turn of the tide, and getting again under weigh at 2 A. M., anchored opposite the village of the Union before daylight on the 4th of April.

About 6 A. M. we were visited from the shore by a mestizo in a canoe, who represented the harbour master (capitan del puerta). Of course we said nothing about the yellow fever being at Guayaquil, so that we were allowed to land without impediment.

The bay of the Union is a fine sheet of water, possessing anchorage from three to twelve fathoms, free from shoals, and well protected from all winds, being a near approach to a circle, and about ten miles in diameter; it is surrounded on three sides by high land, and the entrance is protected by a number of islands, with many deep and safe channels, only one of which is at present used by ships entering and leaving, although many of the others are no doubt equally good, and would be quite as available if surveyed.

On landing, I presented my passport to the port captain, Sen. Nicholas Espinosa, an ugly little dirty mestizo, but a man of most polished manners and address, well known, as I afterwards found, for his want of principle, and distinguished for crime even in a country full of thieves and assassins.

I landed my luggage in the afternoon, and Sen. Espinosa passed it without examination with a very polite bow. After a great deal of difficulty and search, we found an empty room to sleep in, and, after another search, a bedstead and table. In no part of Central America is the traveller ever accommodated with any thing beyond an empty room; hence a hammock is an indispensable article in a journey, otherwise he must make shift with an un-

tanned hide to lay upon the floor, for eating, sleeping, &c., and even this is not always to be had.

The heat here was truly oppressive, even after that of Guayaquil, which is nearly under the equator, and far exceeded anything I ever felt even in the tropical parts of Asia and Africa. I afterwards found that it is the hottest place in Central America. The country round the Union, with the exception of a few patches of maize, is entirely in a state of nature, and covered with a dense forest; it is, however, by no means incapable of cultivation; on the contrary, the nature of the soil seems excellent, being composed of a rich black loam, though mixed with a number of volcanic stones and cinders, as in nearly all parts of Central America. There are, however, no streams in the neighbourhood with water in the dry season, nor indeed any natural springs above high-water mark, though they are abundant in the bay between the limits of high and low water. Several wells have, however, been dug in the village, where excellent water is found at a depth of twelve to fifteen yards.

On the 15th of April I proceeded to Nacascolo, in the state of Nicaragua, in a large canoe (called a bongo), full of native passengers; and after passing two days and nights in the greatest discomfort imaginable without obtaining a moment's sleep, being cramped up in the bottom of the canoe, which was quite full of people who smelt worse than any cargo of pigs, we reached what is termed from custom the port of Nacascolo, being a little mud creek in a small stream thickly bordered with mangroves, where there was just room to thrust in the canoe. I immediately in-

quired for the village (Nuello), but found there was no such place — the only resemblance to a habitation being a little dirty shed not fit for pigs in most parts of the world, where a naked Indian was at work, who could give me nothing to eat, not even the usual country food of tortilias, "having," as he said, "no woman." I however managed to procure a horse, and set off towards Chinendega, accompanied by a man who was one of the passengers, and had been recommended to me as a guide in the Union, on another horse bare backed. The road lay through a deep native forest, and consisted, as all the roads in Central America, of merely a narrow track, sufficient wood having been cut away to enable a single horse to pass. Passing some small huts buried in the forest, we reached Old Chinendega, a distance of only four leagues, in three hours time, having gone at a slow pace on account of the wretched condition of the horses.

Old Chinendega is a neat little town for Central America, containing, perhaps, 3000 to 4000 inhabitants: the only man of wealth or consideration being Don Bernardo Venereo, who is possessed of two fine sugar estates besides one of indigo. Passing Old Chinendega, we reached the new town of Chinendega in an hour more, where we proceeded to the house of Don Chrosanto Medina, a large building resembling an English barn, but the best house in the place. Mr. Medina was not at home, having been obliged to fly from the state for killing an assassin, whose brother, however, being an influential person with the government, would most certainly have got Medina assassinated had he not quickly made his escape. I had a most gruff reception from Mr. Medina's steward, which led me to be-

lieve, that though his master had given me a letter to him with instructions to entertain me, the poor fellow had not the means to do so, being probably left without cash. After a long delay, however, my guide managed to get me something to eat from a sort of cookshop, kept by an unfortunate Frenchman. Having got a bedstead, though without any bed as usual, I lay down a little without undressing; it was the third night I had had no sleep.

Chinendega is a rather pretty town, with from 8000 to 10,000 inhabitants, finely situated in a rich undulating plain, which, if properly cultivated, might produce sugar and cotton to supply all Central America. The houses, as in most parts of Spanish America, consist only of a ground floor; they are built in a very straggling manner, and occupy a larger space than would be done in Europe by a city containing 50,000 inhabitants. A number of fruit trees, principally cocoa nut and orange, with some other species peculiar to the country, give a very pleasing aspect to the town: the climate, though of course tropical, is very different from that of the Union; for a gentle breeze is almost constantly blowing, and the heat is rarely oppressive. This town is one of the few in Central America which have increased since the independence; it is only three leagues from the port of Realejo, all the trade of which passes through it, and perhaps few better situations could be selected in any part of the world for the formation of a large city.

Having procured two horses, we started at 8 A. M. next morning, the 18th of April, for the city of Leon, where we arrived after four hours' ride, stopping at the house of Mr. Thomas Manning, a gentleman

who has resided nearly twenty years in Central America, and made a considerable fortune. He is a native of England, and, like several of his countrymen in South America, turned Roman Catholic to marry a mulatto lady, who is almost white, and very good looking. His house is the best in Leon, and furnished somewhat in the European style, which is very rare in most parts of this country.

Leon is the second city in the republic, and once contained 50,000 inhabitants, though now it certainly has not half that number. Since the independence, it has been the scene of several bloody revolutions, and in 1824, made a desperate defence of 114 days against the federal troops, who were finally repulsed with loss. At least a third part of the city is now in ruins, and the whole has a most wretched and desolate appearance. The inhabitants, who, it is said, were once among the most peaceful and industrious of the republic, are now noted as the worst of all Central America, and are engaged in perpetual broils. Assassination is now so common in the state of Nicaragua, that it is little thought of, and is almost never punished by the authorities; but the relations of the murdered man, if he has any, generally revenge his death by another assassination, and unless the victim be a person of importance, the assassin merely keeps out of the way for a day or two and reappears without fear. I have seen a native enter a house in Realejo with his hands bloody, and when questioned as to the cause, reply with great coolness, that he had met such and such a person on the road, and as he had long determined to kill him, had just plunged his knife into his body and left him in the wood. On my first

arrival I felt naturally somewhat shocked at such a recital; but I afterwards heard assassination so commonly and coolly talked of, that such stories seemed nothing strange nor out of the usual course.

The houses of Leon, as in most parts of South America, excepting Lima, Quito, and perhaps one or two more of the principal cities, consist of a ground story only, in the form of a square, and are all built of "tapeal" mud, beat hard with a mallet, with merely a few stones at the corners to strengthen them. The cathedral is a large Gothic building, but in rather bad taste, and contains many splendid ornaments, despite its have been several times plundered of all the riches which could be discovered. The remaining churches exceed twenty in number, but none of them are remarkable in a Roman Catholic country. Most of them, like the houses, are principally of mud and but few have officiating priests, as even the forms of the Roman Catholic church are not generally kept up in the state, the people having long ago ceased to respect them, and being at present actually destitute of any moral code whatever, or any religion beyond a few unmeaning forms kept up by women and old men as a sort of charm, or talisman, which they do not pretend to understand. Leon was again taken and plundered by Malespein de Ferrera, at the head of the San Salvador and Honduras troops, on the 24th of January, 1845, when a great part of the buildings which had before escaped were reduced to ruins, and it would require many years of a regular government for it to recover its former splendour.

After remaining two days in Leon, and being introduced to the grand marshal, who received me

dressed in a regatta shirt and trowsers, and more than half seas over, I proceeded to the port of Realejo, or rather the town of that name; the road being, like all roads in Central America, a narrow mule track, through a country nearly perfectly level and covered with a dense forest of lofty trees and a thick scrub below them, excepting some small patches which have been cleared for maize, sugar-cane, and cotton. Having lost our road, we did not reach a sugar estate belonging to Don Bernardo Venereo till noon, though we had started at day-light, and the distance did not exceed six leagues. Shortly after leaving the estate, I was stopped by three soldiers, ruffianly looking rascals nearly naked, and with no part of what is in Europe considered as a soldier's equipments except a musket; they wished me to go with them to their commander, which I positively refused, thinking that it must be a mere pretence for robbing me. After some parley, one of them presented his musket at me, telling me to follow directly; I returned the compliment by presenting a pistol, telling him that the musket would be very likely to miss, but that I would answer for the pistol; this seemed to damp their courage a little, and on my guide saying, "let him pass, he is an Englishman," they whispered to one another a little, and either convinced that I was a stranger with whom they could have no enmity, or afraid of attempting violence, seeing that I was well armed, they permitted us at length to proceed, and we reached Realejo about two hours afterwards, stopping at a dirty little public house, kept by a native woman.

The town of Realejo is about two leagues dis-

tant from the part of the creek where vessels lay, but even at present there is a sufficient depth of water for small vessels to come within a mile of the town, and a very little labour would make it accessible to large ships; but an enlightened government would probably prefer moving the town opposite the reach where vessels lay, where there is a site extremely suitable for the purpose, and where a quay might easily be erected capable of accommodating any number of ships. The present town is merely a collection of mud huts, and though it once possessed two churches, the one is now a complete ruin, and the other, though entire, is without a curate or any officiating priest. In the time of the Spanish government, several vessels, some of 300 to 400 tons, were built at Realejo, which affords facilities fully equal to Guayaquil, or any other port on the coast; while the wood is much superior and more durable, consisting as it does of cedar and mahogany, besides a wood resembling Malabar teak, and a vast number of hard woods, said to be almost imperishable. The trade of this port is, however, yearly declining from the wretched state of the government of Nicaragua, which is composed of the worst thieves and assassins of the state.

A few years ago a number of foreigners embarked in the Brazil wood speculation; but the majority were swindled by the government and native traders, the former refusing to let the wood be cut on various pretences, and the latter not delivering it in accordance with their contracts, even after they had

been paid in advance. Captain Moore, the principal adventurer, and most of the rest, were ruined.

The present exports from Realejo may be 400 or 500 bales of cotton, principally sent to Costa Rica for the manufactures of that state; about 1000 tons of Brazil wood, principally sent to Great Britain and the United States of America; a small quantity of chancakee (the crude juice of the sugar-cane boiled till it crystalises), sent to Chili; about 1000 bales of indigo, the quality being the best of any produced in the republic; and a few hundred bales of Granada cocoa, sent to the states of San Salvador and Honduras. On the following morning, the 23d of April, we returned to Chinendega, and next day proceeded to see the sugar and indigo estates near Old Chinendega belonging to Don Bernardo Venereo, which are splendidly situated, and might produce an unlimited amount of sugar and indigo. In most countries they would be very valuable; they possess a fine stream of water, and may be irrigated at all seasons. The sugar mill is a small machine driven by water, but Don Bernardo Venereo has sent to England for fresh machinery; he at present only manufactures coarse spirit (aguardiente) for the consumption of the state, and a small quantity of chancakee, part of which is exported to Chili; the sugar-cane grows most luxuriantly, and is more than sufficient to keep the present mill constantly employed, though not a tenth of the land is at present planted. The description of cane here used is a native of the country, and very different from the Asiatic cane, which is now exclusively cultivated in the West Indies, Brazils, and the United

States of North America. It is said to be about equally productive with the foreign species, the canes being slenderer and softer, but containing more and stronger juice in proportion to their size; two crops are taken annually.

Having this afternoon engaged a bongo to convey us back to the Union, next morning we returned to the splendid port of Nacascolo, and embarked at 1 P. M., having arranged to land on the passage to view and ascend the celebrated volcano of Cosiguina. We got down to the entrance of the creek with the tide, where the boatmen wished to wait all night, but I forced them to lift up the stone which served for an anchor when the tide turned at 1 A. M. At 8 A. M. we reached the point of land opposite Cosiguina, where we landed. One of the boatmen undertook to be my guide in the ascent, or rather to the foot of the mountain (as he had never ascended it), and to carry a small quantity of provisions for the journey. After scrambling among bushes mixed with cinders, scoriæ, and other volcanic substances, for three hours, we reached the foot of the mountain, and commenced the ascent amidst huge blocks of vitrified stones, mixed with large black-looking rocks. The mountain is far from being remarkably steep, nor is the ascent nearly so difficult as that of most volcanic cones. Vegetation has recommenced in some places amidst the cinders; but the appearance is sufficiently desolate, and there are many marks of the late fearful convulsion. It was nearly 2 P. M. before we reached the top, owing to the burning sun, which made the black volcanic rocks so hot that they almost burnt the skin when touched.

The crater is a large rugged orifice, probably a league in circumference, the sides being surrounded by sharp-edged, precipitous rocks, making a descent into it quite impossible, unless the explorer were lowered by a rope; every thing about it is in wild disorder, and the granite rocks, of which the mountain seems to be formed, are partly melted and partly cracked by the intense heat; but there is no trace of any lava stream, and as far as I could see into the abyss of the crater, nothing was visible but a succession of sharp-pointed black rocks. No smoke is now evolved in any part, and before another eruption takes place the winter rains may probably stop the vent with sand and ashes, and fill the crater with water, thus giving it the appearance of an extinct volcano, which it was supposed to be previously to the late eruption. The height of the mountain cannot exceed from 2000 to 3000 feet, and viewed from a distance it has nothing peculiar in its aspect, not even the appearance of a volcano.

Having staid about two hours on the top, and collected a few specimens of the rocks composing the sides of the crater, we set out on our return, meeting on our journey several patches of sulphur in an almost pure state. In some cases it assumes a beautiful bronze colour, showing, it would appear, the presence of iron, and at others it is mixed with some mineral which gives it a green colour. We reached the shore a little after sunset, and after wandering some time, at the risk of falling over one of the many precipices with which the sea is bordered, we at last discovered the canoe, and not wishing to remain on

board among the stinking natives any longer than necessary, I lay down by the side of an overhanging rock, telling the men to rouse me as soon as the tide turned, which they did at 2 A. M., and having got under weigh, we reached a small wooded island at the entrance of the port of La Union, where we remained till 2 P. M., when we again proceeded and reached the town of the Union a little after dark.

Previously to 1835, the mountain called Cosiguina was taken for an extinct volcano, although there were traditions of its having been in a state of eruption upwards of 300 years before, and abundant vestiges of its previous ravages.

At half-past six in the morning of the 20th of January, 1835, the inhabitants of Chinendega, Leon, Realejo, La Union, San Miguel, and the neighbouring country were alarmed by a loud explosion, and immediately afterwards all the horizon was illumined by a dense yellow light, and a strong odour of sulphur was smelt, while a heavy shower of fine white powder fell, penetrating into every recess, and rendering respiration painful and difficult: this continued till one o'clock in the morning of the 23d, the sun and stars being meanwhile invisible, and a pale sickly light, like some of the London fogs, pervading the country; at the same time a terrific explosion was heard throughout all Central America, and as far as the borders of Mexico, the republic of New Granada, and the island of Jamaica. The scene that followed was terrific in the extreme — the birds rushed out of the woods, and fell down dead in the fields and villages — the wild beasts wandered into

the towns and along the public roads, bellowing with terror, their natural ferocity and timidity being equally subdued. The astonished people supposed that the day of judgment was come, and rushed to the churches, throwing themselves upon the floors before the images of their saints; others confessed their sins and implored mercy; all was terror and dismay; and, to complete the horror of the scene, a terrific darkness, deeper than the most obscure night, continued for forty-three hours; so that no person could see a yard before him, and even artificial lights could not be distinguished at more than a few feet distance. During this time there were continued noises, louder than the most terrific peals of thunder, accompanied by lightnings, which played in all directions, rendering the darkness more terrible, and such immense quantities of ashes fell as in some parts to cover the earth three feet deep. These effects were more or less felt to a distance of fifty leagues round the volcano, as far as the capital of the state of San Salvador — about fifteen leagues distant in a direct line from the volcano; and Don Juakin Salgero, at that time collector of customs (Administrador de la Aduana), told me that words could not describe the terrific nature of the scene; and considering it, as he did, to be an eruption of the extinct volcano of Conchagua, distant about a league, or some neighbouring mountain, he set off for San Miguel in the midst of the darkness, some men carrying torches of lighted pine to discover the road, which, however, was very difficult, as the darkness was so pitchy that a torch could not be seen at three yards' distance.

He was accompanied in his flight by a number of

the terrified inhabitants, some on foot and some on mules and horses. The cattle and even the wild animals followed the lights along the road; while the birds came and lit upon the persons and horses of the travellers, and would not be driven away; even the lizards and other reptiles seemed to look to them for protection, instead of flying from them as usual. They reached San Miguel in about fifteen hours, the usual time for the journey being half that period (it being only a distance of fifteen leagues); but on their arrival the darkness continued nearly as intense, though the other phenomena had slightly abated in violence. Two considerable streams of water flowing past the side of the mountain were covered with ashes and stones, and have since entirely disappeared; and immediately after the eruption two islands were discovered in twelve fathoms water, a little off the coast opposite the volcano, which still exist.

Not a vestige of habitations, or of animal or vegetable life remained for some leagues round the mountain, and the sites where some excellent cattle farms existed are still pointed out, though now covered with a thick mass of cinders and charred rocks. The effects of this eruption were distinctly felt in the islands of Jamaica and Hayti, and other parts of the West Indies, and the ashes ejected reached as far as Oajaca in Mexico, a distance of 430 leagues.

On reaching the town of the Union, I immediately landed, and, after the usual difficulties, at last found a place to sleep, being pretty well tired with my first essay at travelling in Central America.

On the 4th of May, at 8 P. M., we started for San Miguel, in company with Don Chrosanto Medina and San Don Nicholas Espinosa, the captain of the port, Mariano Salazar, Medina's brother-in-law, and two other natives. At 10 P. M. we stopped at a hut in a small village called the Baranka, four leagues from the Union, where I lay down outside the hut till three in the morning (without sleeping, of course), when we again proceeded on our journey at 8 A. M., passing the village of San Antonio, which consists of about twenty huts, bordering on a small river of the same name, and arriving at San Miguel at ten in the forenoon. The plan of travelling at night to avoid the heat may appear very plausible in a tropical climate; but the danger of the beasts falling on the unmade tracks or of being tumbled off by coming in contact with the branch of a tree in the dark, appears to me to more than countervail the advantages. In a long journey it would be quite impracticable, without carrying tents and three or four mules laden with provisions, &c.; for otherwise no sleep could be obtained, as there is no such thing as a separate apartment to be had in all Central America for travellers. The plan is not followed by the natives, who give another good reason against it, namely, the impossibility of being certain of the right path in the dark, where the road is no more than an Indian track, and in many cases nearly obliterated.

The only cultivation on the road is at San Antonio, where a little maize is grown. There is, however, another road by San Alejo, which I have also travelled: it is about a league longer,

but passes through a much more interesting country, cultivated in several parts, besides San Alejo, which is a beautifully situated village, containing about 2000 inhabitants, principally Indians.

The town, or, as it is called, the "city," of San Miguel, a name very freely applied in Central America, is said to contain upwards of 10,000 inhabitants, but, judging from its extent and the density of the population, I feel assured it cannot contain so many. The streets are wide, at right angles, and pretty well paved; the houses have all, as usual, merely a ground floor, and, with a few exceptions, of mud; there are eight churches, all rather mean edifices, and unworthy of notice. San Miguel is only celebrated for its fairs, three of which are held there in the course of the year; the principal, which is the most important in Central America, takes place on the 21st of November. At these fairs more business is done than in all the rest of the state during the remainder of the year. Several vessels generally arrive at the Union from South America at these periods, and nearly all the indigo (the only produce of any importance) is disposed of: formerly it reached 10,000 bales, but at present it will not, at most, exceed 3000 bales of 150 lbs. each.

The indigo, well-known in Europe by the name of Guatemala indigo, was never cultivated in that province (in the same manner as not a grain of the Honduras cochineal is grown there), being entirely grown in the state of San Salvador, in the vicinity of San Miguel, San Vicenti, and the city of San Salvador, with the exception of a small quantity of very superior quality grown in the state of Nicaragua

and a few bales in Costa Rica, which is all consumed in the state. Under the government of Spain the produce of the state of San Salvador alone had reached 10,000 bales, and that of Nicaragua 2000, the produce of San Salvador in 1820, two years before its independence, being 8323 bales. But since 1822 the annual produce has gradually declined, and at the present period (1846), it does not exceed 1000 to 1200 bales, nearly all the indigo estates being abandoned, partly, no doubt, from the great fall in the price of the article, but more on account of the impossibility of getting labourers to work steadily, the continued civil wars having imbued the whole population with idle habits and a disinclination to labour, while the insecurity of property and the robberies of government have discouraged all parties from attempting any cultivation which requires outlay of capital, and reduced it nearly to maize and other articles required for food.

The plant cultivated in Central America for the manufacture of indigo is the indigofera, a triennial plant, supposed to be a native of America; but there is also an indigenous perennial plant, abounding in many parts of Central America, which produces indigo of a very superior quality, but gives less than half the weight which is produced by the cultivated species. The ground for sowing the indigo seed is prepared in April — a piece of good forest land near one of the towns being selected, a part is cut to make a rude fence, and the remainder burnt, which is easily accomplished as every thing is very dry at that season — and the ground is afterwards scratched with two sticks fastened crosswise, to resemble somewhat the

shape of a plough, and the seed scattered over it by hand. The rainy season always commences early in May, and the indigo is ready for cutting about the middle of July, taking about two and a half months to come to perfection. The growing crop somewhat resembles lucerne, and is in the best state for making indigo when it becomes covered with a sort of greenish farina.

The crop of the first year is small, and sometimes not worth manufacturing; that of the second year is the best; and the third is also very good if it has been carefully weeded; but many indigo fields have lasted more than ten years without being resown, as the seed which falls naturally springs up again, and where the land is good yields nearly as large a crop as a new sown field. When the plant is ready for manufacturing, a number of men are collected, each of whom is either provided with or brings his own mule or horse, if he has one. Two men always go together, cut the plant, then about the height of full grown red clover, and take it to the vats, which are large tanks made of brick and lime, holding at least 1000 gallons, and some as much as 10,000. Into these the plant is thrown till they are nearly full, when weights are put above it to prevent its floating, and the vats filled with water till it covers the mass of the indigo plant. After remaining from twelve to twenty-four hours, according to the state of the plant, weather, and other circumstances (the time required being determined by the colour which the water assumes), the herb is taken out, and the water beaten with paddles in the very small vats, and by a wheel suspended above, and turned by men or horses

in the larger ones, till it changes from a green colour, which it has acquired ere the removal of the herb, to a fine blue, when it is allowed to stand for some hours till the colouring matter has settled to the bottom of the tank,—a process which is generally hastened by throwing in an infusion of certain herbs to facilitate its settlement, or, as the natives term it, to curdle (cuajar) the coloured water. As soon as all the colour has settled, the water is drawn off, and the blue, which is of the consistency of thin mud, is taken out of the vat and spread upon cotton, or coarse woollen cloth, and dried in the sun. The colour, in a great measure, depends upon removing the herb exactly at the proper time, and upon properly beating the water, neither too long nor too short. Unless these processes are properly performed, the indigo will never be of first-rate quality; but some estates will never produce the best indigo, whatever care may be bestowed on the manufacture. A mansana of 100 yards square, which is nearly two British statute acres, produces generally about 100 to 120 pounds of indigo, the carriage and cutting of the herb costing about twenty dollars, and the cleaning of the field and all other expenses connected with it, including the manufacture of the indigo, about as much more.

The indigo of Central America is not put into moulds when drying as that of Bengal, but is allowed to remain in the rough shape in which it dries, and without further preparation is ready for baling and exportation. The bales are generally made up in 150 lbs. each, and the quality is classed by numbers from 1. to 9.; Nos. 1. to 3. being of the quality called

cobres in Europe, Nos. 4. to 6. of that called cortes, and Nos. 7. to 9. of that called flores; Nos. 1. to 6. do not, at present, pay the expenses of manufacture, and are never intentionally made. No doubt, with a little more skill in the manufacture, the whole might, as in Bengal, be made of the quality called flores; but such improvements cannot be expected till a new race of people inhabit Central America. At present, about one half of the indigo produced is under No. 7., and as the cultivation is said not to pay at the present prices — and, indeed, hardly can be supposed to compete with Bengal, a country where labour is so much cheaper, and capital abundant — it is probable that the cultivation will shortly be entirely abandoned, unless the price should again rise in Europe. Such an event would leave the state of San Salvador without any available export whatever, as the value of the other productions is not worth naming, and the natives seem to have no intention of turning their industry to other articles which might be profitably cultivated.

San Miguel is situated at the foot of the volcano of that name, which rears its lofty head, literally as it would appear, to the skies; though not nearly the highest mountain in Central America, yet as it rises abruptly from a plain very little above the level of the sea, it has a more magnificent appearance, and looks higher from below, than any other mountain I have ever seen in any part of the world, not excepting Chimborazo, and the Mountains of the Moon. All the country for more than ten leagues round is covered with vestiges of its eruptions, and it has several times threatened to destroy San Miguel,

which is evidently built upon the site of an ancient eruption, the whole of the land being covered with immense masses of lava, scoriæ, and charred rocks; even now the mountain is threatening an eruption, the last having taken place only two years ago.

San Miguel is distant about a league from a fine river called the Rio Grande (great river). Why it was not built on the banks I cannot conceive. To be sure there is no lack of water, for in its immediate vicinity there is a number of most copious springs, which burst from under the masses of volcanic rocks and cinders, through which it would appear that the water filters for some distance, till its underground course is stopped by meeting with more solid strata, when it rushes out in a large stream clear as crystal, forming a number of inimitable natural baths which are used by the natives. The country round San Miguel is but scantily cultivated, and there is nearly an entire absence of gardens or fruit trees, though the few that have been planted thrive admirably, and show that the indolence of man, not nature, is to blame for their deficiency.

War had just been declared against the state of Guatemala, and the government were occupied in catching men for soldiers like wild cattle here and in all parts of the state, and raising money by forced contributions, so that the fair, which was about to take place, must prove an entire failure. Those who had anything to be robbed of were taking themselves off as quickly as possible, and the common people were hiding in the woods to avoid being taken for soldiers. My acquaintance, Don Chrosanto Medina, and a friend of his, a Spaniard, Don Francisca

Geral, wished to make all their property over to me, to prevent its being seized for government contributions. I told them that they were welcome to do so, but that if it was seized I should not be able to claim it from the government through her Britannic majesty's consul, as he would probably require me to swear that the property was mine before making the claim. This difficulty seemed to surprise them a good deal, as a false oath is thought nothing of in Spanish America, and they tried the Jesuits' argument, "that the oath would not be made for a bad purpose," in order to get over my scruples; but finding that they could not convince me, they were obliged to take other schemes for protecting their property. They managed so badly that, as I afterwards learned, the government got 10,000 dollars from them.

I have always refused to lend my name to natives to enable them to avoid the exactions of their government, as the discovery of such a practice would form a good excuse for robbing British subjects, who have hitherto, with but few exceptions, been saved the payment of forced loans. This, I believe, is not a little owing to the firm measures and determined stand made against all such exactions by the present consul-general, Mr. Chatfield, as even the French are often forced to pay while the British are excepted. On the 7th, the day before the fair, I was introduced to Mr. Walter Bridge, a gentleman who has been more than twenty years resident in Nicaragua. He is a British subject, and though now possessed of a handsome fortune, has once or twice been plundered of everything by the government, and has passed through many interesting adventures. He is most

kind and hospitable to all his countrymen, and I have had occasion, in many instances, to be grateful to him for his advice and assistance. On the 10th of May we returned to the Union, and Mr. Bridge, having been kind enough to offer me a passage on board his ship, the Albert Henry, to Costa Rica, we embarked on the 14th, calling at Realejo, where Mr. Bridge had some business to transact, besides seeing his lady in Chinendega. We reached the port in twenty hours from leaving the Union, the Albert Henry, a North American vessel under the United States' flag, being a fast sailer, like so many vessels of that country.

I may confidently say that Realejo is at least as good a port as any in the known world. I have seen Portsmouth, Rio Janiero, Port Jackson, Talcujana, Callao, and Guayaquil, and to all of these I consider it decidedly superior. It is a salt-water creek, into which several small streams of water empty themselves. The entrance is protected by an island about two miles long, which leaves at each end a channel where ships can enter the harbour, but extending opposite the main land, forming the port in such a manner as to protect it entirely from any wind that can possibly blow, and also entirely breaking the swell which enters the outer bay of Conchagua from the ocean. The north entrance is about a quarter of a mile wide, and that at the south of the island rather narrower, both being entirely free from rocks or hidden dangers, and having in no part less than five fathoms' depth of water. At one of these openings, vessels can at all times enter with a leading wind from whatever quarter it may blow. The inside consists

of a noble basin of water, nowhere less than four fathoms deep, with a bottom of mud, where 200 ships of the line might lie at all times in the most perfect security. Merchant-vessels generally lie about a mile from the entrance, in the branch of the creek which runs up to Realejo, where there are about five fathoms water over a mud bottom. Opposite this port there is a fine level beach, possessing deep water close to the edge, which would form an admirable site for a town; and where, at very little expense, a wharf might be constructed capable of accommodating almost any number of vessels. Were proper batteries erected on the rocky island at the entrance, no enemy could possibly enter, for, if required, a chain could also be extended across each of the two mouths. One of the branches of this creek extends inland to within three leagues of the lake of Leon or Managua. The intermediate country is a gentle slope, where, undoubtedly, should enter one of the ends of the canal to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans; and it is much to be regretted that Mr. Bailey was not instructed to make his surveys on this line instead of that adopted. From the report of this able engineer, it will be seen that the only difficulties in the line he surveyed are in crossing the chain of hills between the lake of Nicaragua and Saint John of the south, which would be entirely avoided by bringing the canal through the lake of Leon (connected as it is with that of Nicaragua by a river that might be rendered navigable at a moderate cost), into the above-named branch of Realejo harbour, thus securing the great

advantage of an excellent harbour at each end of the canal, besides many others which can certainly not be met with at Panama, Tehuantepec, or any other place.

As I have referred to this subject, I shall here make a few extracts from a pamphlet published in Guatemala, which I trust will prove generally interesting. "The opening of a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, has commanded more or less attention ever since the discovery of America, and even the Spanish government has had its attention forcibly drawn to it. The reasons given for not attempting such a work, are of a most singular nature. The government of the sixteenth century were, it appears, deterred by the fear that if such a work were undertaken, the necessary labour would finish the remnant of Indians left by the oppression of the conquerors, or that if the voyage round Cape Horn were altered for so short and easy a passage, the coasts would become infested by pirates, who would prey upon the commerce passing through the canal. The learned prelate, P. Acorta, writing in 1588, gives a reason against it, which appears still more strange in the present day; speaking of the project he says: 'I am of opinion that no human power would be sufficient to cut through the strong and impenetrable bounds which God has put between the two oceans, of mountains and iron rocks which can stand the fury of the raging seas. And if it were possible it would appear to me very just to fear the vengeance of Heaven for attempting to improve the works which the Creator, in his Almighty will and providence, ordered from the creation of the world.' Others have

pretended to fear that were a canal cut through the isthmus, the rush of waters from the Pacific would swamp the West India Islands, and even Europe itself, and many learned treatises have been written to prove it; but even were it possible to cut through a level canal without ascending locks, which is sufficiently absurd to expect, there would be no reason to fear any such catastrophe, as according to the measurements made by Mr. Lloyd, at the Isthmus of Panama in 1829, the Pacific at high water only rises 13·55 feet above the average level of the Atlantic, and at low water falls 6½ feet below it, so that the difference in the level of the two seas is very trifling. The British have made several attempts to possess themselves of Saint John of Nicaragua and Realejo, with a view, no doubt, to secure the country through which the proposed canal should pass, but with singularly bad fortune; the first attempt was made in 1740, by the superintendent of the Moschito coast, but the attempt was disavowed by the British government, which, however, in 1780, sent a squadron composed of two frigates, two brigs of war, and a line of battle ship, carrying a number of flat boats, and 2000 men, under the command of Colonel J. Polson.

"On the 28th of March, the flotilla reached the port of Saint John of Nicaragua, but none of the vessels would venture to cross the bar, except the corvette Henchinbrack, commanded by the afterwards celebrated Nelson, who ascended the river for many leagues, as far as the island of Mico; the troops were, however, embarked in the flat boats, and ascended the river without opposition as far as the port of San Carlos, which they took after about a month's

siege, making prisoners the garrison of 160 men; but in the mean time the government had collected large forces from San Miguel and other parts. Great difficulties also presented themselves to the British. The wet season set in with its accompanying sickness, and the Zombors of the coast, who had been hired to track up the boats, went away, so that the soldiers were forced to walk in the water and mud to pull the boats forward, from which labour they suffered exceedingly, great numbers falling sick and dying daily; meanwhile, reinforcements having been received under Captains Campbell, Dalrymple, and Leith, which increased the force to 8000 men, the expedition was persevered in; but the armed boat, called the Lord Germain, was the only one which reached the lake of Nicaragua, where it arrived in the end of May. The increase of sickness among the troops to so alarming an extent, that not a fourth part were fit for service, prevented the expedition from moving forward; they remained, however, till the commencement of November, expecting fresh reinforcements, till they received notice that they had disembarked at Jamaica, typhus fever having been discovered on board the squadron, when it was judged necessary to abandon this mismanaged attempt. But not one half of the men ever left the country, the remainder having died of tropical fevers. Had the ministry, who planned this expedition, been at all informed regarding the nature of the country they proposed to conquer, they would, of course, have sent the expedition so as to arrive at the commencement of the dry and healthy season, and had this been done, the result might have been very

different. It would appear that one of the schemes of Gooday, 'the Prince of the Peace,' was the opening of the Nicaragua Canal, but his fall put an end to this and many other excellent schemes, which might have, in some degree, compensated for his treacherous conduct to the Spanish royal family.

"After the independence of Central America, the first attempt towards opening this canal was made by Señ Manuel Antonie de la Cerda, afterwards Governor of the state of Nicaragua, who, in July 1823, urged the matter upon the federal congress, laying before them an imaginary plan of the river of Saint John, the lake of Nicaragua, and the territory between it and the Pacific; but the succeeding disturbances prevented any thing being done till the year 1825, when different proposals were made by foreign speculators on the subject; and the National Federal Congress, on the 16th of June of that year, passed the following decree: —

"Art. 1. Authorises the opening of a canal fitted for the passage of the largest vessels in the state of Nicaragua.

"Art. 2. The works to be of the most solid construction.

"Art. 3. The government shall offer to the undertakers an indemnification equivalent to the cost and labour of the work.

"Art. 4. The government shall take all means of facilitating the object: permitting the cutting of wood; assisting the surveyors; forwarding the plans; and, generally, in every manner not injurious to public or private interests.

"Art. 5. No duty shall be charged on instruments and machinery imported for the works of the canal.

"Art. 6. The expense of the work shall be acknowledged as a national debt, and the tolls of the canal shall all be applied to that purpose, after deducting the necessary costs of maintenance and repairs, and the maintenance of a garrison for its defence.

"Art. 7. Any dispute regarding its liquidation or proofs of outlay, shall be determined according to the laws of the republic.

"Art. 8. The Congress shall be entitled to establish, and at all times alter, the rates of toll as it may think proper.

"Art. 9. The navigation shall be open to all nations, friends or neutrals, without privilege or exclusion.

"Art. 10. The government shall maintain on the lake the necessary vessels for its defence.

"Art. 11. If invincible impediments discovered in the course of the work prevent its execution, the republic shall not be liable to make any remuneration whatever.

"Art. 12. In case only a boat canal can be opened, the indemnification shall be proportioned to the smaller benefit which will then result to the republic.

"This decree, passed by the Congress, was published jointly with another of the government, fixing the term of six months for receiving the proposals of such parties or companies as should offer to undertake the enterprise. The period being too short to admit of measures being taken for forwarding such an enterprise in Europe, the Congress only received a repetition of a part of the proposals before made. The

principal of these were made by Mr. Bailey and Mr. Charles Beniski; the first as agent for the house of Messrs. Barclay, Herring, Richardson and Company, of London, and the second for Messrs. Aron and Palmer of New York. The government certainly ought to have preferred the first of these offers, both on account of Mr. Bailey's known character and experience, and the respectability of the house with which he was connected; but Mr. Bailey only offered to make a conditional agreement, subject to the approbation of the principals in London, whereas Beniski did not hesitate at once to sign an unconditional contract, in which, as a further inducement, he offered to advance 200,000 dollars to government for objects connected with the canal. This and other magnificent offers, which were easily made by a person who could lose nothing by their non-fulfilment, decided the government in favour of Beniski's offer, without (as the representatives of a more enlightened nation would have done) inquiring what security they had from the agent of a New York broker, for the fulfilment of so great an enterprise. Beniski, therefore, bound himself to open through Nicaragua, a canal navigable for vessels of all sizes, and to deposit in the city of Granada the sum of 200,000 dollars for the preliminary expenses within the period of six months; to erect fortresses for the safety of the canal, and to have all the works in progress within twelve months at latest. In compensation, he was to receive two thirds of the profits of the tolls upon the canal, until all the capital laid out in the undertaking was repaid, with interest at the rate of 10 per cent., besides afterwards receiving half the proceeds

of the canal for seven years, and certain privileges for the introduction of steam vessels. The government was to put at his disposal all the documents relating to the subject existing in the archives; permit the cutting of wood and furnish labourers for the work, who, however, were to be paid by the contractor, though remaining under the inspection of the government.

"In case of non-completion, the government was not bound to allow anything for the works executed. But Beniski soon found that he could not secure, either capital or other means to carry out his engagement; having, first, without success, tried to get up a company in the United States, and afterwards in London, where a magnificent prospectus was put forth, declaring that the scheme was under the patronage of the President of the United States, and giving a list of the leading members of the national senate and the government of New York as directors, but without successfully gulling the public.

"It seems, however, very probable, that none of the other speculators, though of a much more respectable class, would have been able to secure the immense capital required for so grand an undertaking.

"After this disappointment, the project was allowed to sleep till October 1828, when the King of the Netherlands proposed to undertake the work, if it should be considered practicable, after the necessary surveys had been executed. The idea seems to have originated with General Verveer, minister from the Netherlands to the grand diet of Panama, who was doubtlessly urged to it by the representatives of Central America, aware as they were of the great

advantage the line of Nicaragua possessed over that of Panama. In March 1829, the Dutch general arrived in Guatemala, as plenipotentiary from his government to the United States of Central America, and also with instructions regarding the undertaking of the canal; but, as Central America was then in the midst of one of her incessant revolutions, nothing was done till the following year, when the matter was taken up by the federal congress, and on the 21st of October, they passed a series of new resolutions upon the subject. The offers made by the King of the Netherlands were of an extremely liberal nature; the work was to be executed by a company of Dutch capitalists under the protection of the king; as soon as the outlay with 10 per cent. interest was repaid to the company, the canal was to revert to the republic of Central America. The government having determined to send envoys to the Netherlands with full powers to conclude all the arrangements, little doubt appeared that the work would finally be proceeded with; but the revolution of Belgium, and its separation from Holland, put an end to these hopes. In 1832, endeavours were made to revive the negotiation with Holland, and the legislature of the state of Nicaragua passed a number of resolutions agreeing to the proposals of the Dutch envoy; but nothing beyond talking was done by the Central American government. No envoy was sent to Holland, nor did any plenipotentiary again reach Central America, so that the subject has been quite dropped by both parties. In 1837, the subject was again taken up by the government of General Morazan, which resolved to have the proposed line of the canal exactly sur-

veyed, intending to raise a loan in Europe for the execution of the work. Mr. John Bailey was employed for the former purpose; but when, after three years' labour, he had completed the whole of the survey of the line indicated, except the levels between the lake of Nicaragua and the Atlantic, his work was brought to a sudden close by the dissolution of the federal government, and the whole of his labours have as yet been entirely unpaid by the wretched shadows of governments which have succeeded in the different states. A short summary of the results of the survey will be found in the comparison made by Mr. Bailey between the advantages of the canals of Nicaragua and Panama; but it is much to be regretted, that the survey was not carried on the line passing through the lakes of Leon or Managua to the port of Realejo, which is universally considered preferable by parties well acquainted with the country."

The *Journal des Debats* has the following shrewd remarks regarding the execution of a canal between the two oceans. "It is not sufficient (says that journal, of the 13th of August, 1845) to plan a canal, it is, moreover, necessary to make it — it is necessary to procure workmen and provisions for their maintenance. If masons and sappers be brought from a distance, they must not be placed in an unhealthy climate, where they will probably be decimated by epidemic diseases. In this view the line by Chagres and Panama is vastly deficient. The population is very small, and the few inhabitants are of an exceedingly lazy disposition, so that it would be indispensable to transport thither a whole army of workmen, whose best composition would be a

mixture of negroes for spade works, and land and marine engineers for the finer works. Besides, part of the territory, through which the canal ought to extend, is marshy and in a most deadly climate, where the burning rays of the sun fall nearly vertically during the whole year, which would prove most fatal to European workmen. On the contrary, the borders of the lakes of Nicaragua and Leon are healthy, only the vicinity of the coasts being subject to epidemic fevers. All travellers agree in saying that it is a delightful country, of extraordinary fertility, and, that as much as four crops of maize are produced in the year in some places. Here we also meet with populous towns and villages, more thickly strewn than in some parts of Europe; this is an inestimable advantage."

I can fully confirm the truth of all these remarks except the last, in which there is a little exaggeration; and being well acquainted with both climates, would certainly say that no comparison can be drawn between Panama, one of the most deadly climates in the known world, and Nicaragua, one of the most healthy for a tropical climate.

The surveys of the canal were not completed, when the state government of Nicaragua proposed a preliminary scheme of making a road from the lake of Leon to Realejo, and clearing the rivers of Saint John, and that forming the junction of the two lakes. This scheme would be more within the means possessed by the country, though even this would be far too much to expect from the present government without foreign assistance: but from the great improvements now making in railroads, it may perhaps

be deemed expedient to make one for the three leagues required to join the lake of Leon and the harbour of Realejo only, clearing and improving the natural navigation of the rest of the line. In 1838, a convention was made between the states of Nicaragua and Honduras, under which Señ Pedro Rouhand was authorised to conclude an agreement in France for the formation of a company to make the canal, and other objects, but he returned without effecting any thing; the same result has attended the measures taken by Dr. Don Gorgé Viteri, ambassador from Rome, and Bishop of Saint Salvador, and of a second envoy sent to the court of France by the governments of Nicaragua and Honduras, the French government wisely declining to treat with the representative of two such despicable and petty governments.

From what has been said, it is to be presumed that no doubt can be entertained of the practicability of this grand and most useful undertaking, and it is to be hoped that many years will not elapse before it will be put in progress by the intervention of Great Britain, or some of the great naval powers most interested in its completion.

CHAP. II.

VOYAGE TO PUNTA ARENAS. — COAST OF NICOYA, PUNTA ARENAS. — JOURNEY TO, AND DESCRIPTION OF SAN JOSE, ALHAJUELA, AND HERIDIA. — CULTIVATION OF COFFEE. — VISIT TO CARTAGO AND ASCENT OF THE VOLCANO. — RETURN TO PUNTA ARENAS. — ARRIVAL AT REALEJO AND CHINENDEGA. — WAR WITH HONDURAS. — H. B. M. SHIP DAPHNE. — BLOCKADE OF THE UNION. — ASCENT OF THE VOLCANO OF CONCHAGUA. — JOURNEY TO GUATEMALA WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNS OF SAN SALVADOR AND SONSONATE, AND THE VOLCANO OF ISALCO.

On the 17th of May, at 6 P. M., we left Realejo for Punta Arenas, which we reached on the 21st, at 11 A. M., having had a light fair wind during the whole passage.

We sailed close along the coast of Nicoya, which once formed part of the state of Nicaragua, but two years ago joined the more quiet and secure government of Costa Rica. It is a most picturesque and beautiful country, and like many other parts of Central America, capable of producing nearly every tropical plant to advantage, being intersected with numerous rich valleys watered by copious streams. At present the population is very scanty, and the only branch of industry is the rearing of cattle for the Costa Rica market. A pearl fishery has long existed on this coast, and pearls are said to be more abundant along it than even at Panama. Considerable quantities have been offered me for sale at Punta Arenas, but they were all of very inferior quality, and

worth very little. I had reason, however, to suspect that the best pearls had previously been picked out, and that the refuse were offered to me in the hope that I did not understand the articles, and might be induced to purchase from the low price.

The port of Punta Arenas, as its name (literally, sandy point) implies, consists of an inner and outer harbour; the first is formed by a long sand spit and the main land, and is only accessible for vessels not drawing above seven feet water. The outer harbour is pretty well sheltered by two islands from the winds and swell rolling into the Gulf of Nicoya from the Pacific. The anchorage is but indifferent, and as vessels, not able to enter the inner harbour, must lie a league from the landing-place, all the cargo must be landed in boats, and, there being no wharf or pier, the landing can only be effected for about half of the tide, which causes a great delay in loading and unloading vessels.

The village is built upon the sand spit, which is about two leagues long, and not exceeding a quarter of a mile broad, and in no part more than ten feet above high-water mark; it is all formed of loose sand, into which the foot sinks several inches at every step, and forms a most disagreeable residence, every thing when the wind blows, being covered with fine sand, which penetrates into the innermost recesses of the houses. It produces nothing but the wild indigo plant, which is manufactured to a small extent by the natives, and a poisonous shrub, called the manzanilla; but singular to relate, fresh water is found in all parts of the point, of most excellent quality, by digging two or three yards below the

surface. This would appear to be sea water filtered by passing through the fine sand, and is a singular instance of the purification of salt water in so short a distance, as the wells produce equally good water when dug close to the high water mark of the sea.

Punta Arenas is a new settlement, made by the government of Costa Rica. From its position, it is open to the breeze on every side, and, though a most unpleasant residence, is far from unhealthy. The former port on the S. W. side is Calderas, a remarkably fine harbour, very safe and convenient, but possessing so fatal a climate that nearly all the government officers died off in two years' time: this, no doubt, arose from its situation, buried as it is in a dense primeval forest.

It is now, again, proposed to move the port to Tercoles, a creek higher up the bay, which is said to possess the advantages of being nearer the capital of the state, with a much better harbour, a fertile territory, and greater salubrity. I, however, doubt much if the government will consent to the sacrifice of losing what they have laid out upon Punta Arenas in building a custom-house, &c.

Punta Arenas being the only port of any consideration (for the trade of Matina, the port of the N.E. coast, is not worth mentioning) in the thriving State of Costa Rica, possesses a rapidly increasing commerce. This year (1845) the exports of coffee were about 50,000 quintals, and in three years more they are expected to reach 100,000, and the imports will of course be in proportion. This is the end of the coffee season, as the crop is gathered in February; but there are still loading in the port two British vessels of 300 tons each, one Hamburger of 400 tons,

one North American of 180, and one Chilian, and one Equador schooner.

On the 24th of May, at daylight, we set off for San José, having with great difficulty procured mules and a guide. I was accompanied by a young man, a native of the state, who had arrived from Guatemala, with woollen manufactures, to the value of some thousand dollars. Here he is called a comerciante (merchant), but would in England be called a pedlar. All Spanish Americans are, however, fond of high-sounding titles, and as they cost nothing, they are pretty liberally applied: he is a dark-coloured Mestizo, which is rare in this state. At 2 P.M. it commenced to rain hard, and we were obliged to stop for the night at a small hut about ten leagues on our journey. This hut is pleasantly situated, being close to the foot of the Table Land, where nearly all the population of the state is situated: it has a neat garden, with a pretty brook running alongside, and the people are much more obliging than I have seen them in other parts of the Republic, in consequence of their being accustomed to be paid for whatever is asked for, which is very frequently not the case in the other states, where the parting salutation (Dios lo pague) "God will pay you," is often too appropriate for the poor natives. Strangers, however, seldom pay in this coin, and are, consequently, generally more readily and better attended to.

Early in the morning we ascended a steep mountain (Cuesta de Jocote), the seat of a number of gold mines, part of which are worked by a private English company, which, though it is said to

possess several very rich mines, has never paid any dividend. I visited two of the mines; but, like all gold workings, there is nothing to be seen; for the gold is contained in a dark reddish earth, which is stamped by machinery, and then stirred in running water to remove its lighter particles, the gold and heavier parts falling to the bottom. The residue, in which no gold can be detected by the eye, is then dried, and the metal taken up by quicksilver, the process I believe being the same in all gold mines. Great numbers of loads of auriferous earth have been discovered in this mountain, and as it is nearly all unexamined as yet, and covered with a dense forest, it is reasonable to suppose that many more would reward an active search: the gold is pure, that is to say, not mixed with any other metal. Ascending the mountain of Jocote, we encountered a large troop of long-armed monkeys, the largest being about four feet in height. They did not appear to be the least timid, but kept close above us in the lofty trees, springing from one to another by inconceivably long leaps, and as usual, making comical gestures when we looked at them. At 10 A. M. we reached the fortress, which commands the pass of Jocote, about five leagues from San José, where we breakfasted: this is the only possible route by which the city can be entered from this side of the continent, all the rest of the country being rendered impassable by huge ravines and perpendicular rocks, over which a deer could not force its way, and a few men and guns would make it quite impossible for any body of troops to force an entry. In 1842, General Morazan only entered from the treachery of

the forces sent to guard it; otherwise he could not have thought of attempting it. An enemy not possessed of shipping could hardly attempt to enter by the other coast. Even after landing at Matina, an army could scarcely manage to march through the intervening swamps and forests; and as the Table Land, where the population is concentrated, produces abundant food for the inhabitants, this little state could never be subdued against the inclination of its inhabitants. The government of Costa Rica deserves great praise for being the only one in Spanish America which has made passable roads since their independence. The road from San José to Punta Arenas, though far from rivalling such works in Europe, is quite passable for the carts of the country, each of which conveys half a ton of coffee from the capital to the port, a distance of twenty-five leagues over a country naturally of the most impassable nature, in four or five days. There is an export duty of a real a quintal, applied to making and keeping the roads in repair, and private subscriptions to a considerable extent have also been made among the planters.

Three handsome bridges have been erected over deep ravines, and two more are in course of construction over the two most rapid rivers on the road. At 2 P.M. we entered among the coffee plantations, and at three o'clock reached the city of San José during a smart shower of rain.

The city of San José, now capital of the state of Costa Rica, is situated in an extensive plain. The towns of Heridia and Alhajuela are respectively two and four leagues distant, and are easily seen from

San José. These three towns and the old capital of Cartaga, which is only six leagues distant, contain all the population of the state, with a trifling exception. San José is estimated to contain 20,000 inhabitants, which I think may be a little under the mark. It has only one church, and no building worthy of notice. The streets are, as usual in America, straight and at right angles, dividing the city into squares of 100 Spanish yards (varas). The houses have never more than a ground story; a few are of stone, but by far the greater part of mud. In the interior arrangements and comfort, however, the houses are only second to those of Guatemala, though far from comparable with those of more advanced countries. All the surrounding country, except a common of a mile square belonging to the city, is richly cultivated, being mostly partitioned out into coffee plantations, of which it is the centre, the neighbourhood producing two-thirds of the crop.

The situation is very fine, being a plain averaging five leagues in width, and ten in length, but partly interspersed with low hills, which are rocky and cannot be cultivated. A pleasant stream, on which are placed mills and machines for cleaning coffee, passes the city.

The inhabitants of this state are nearly all white, not having mixed with the Indians as in other parts of Spanish America, and the few who are coloured have no doubt come from the neighbouring states. Their character is very different from all other parts of Central America; they are industrious, though not fond of hard work; every family has a small coffee or sugar-cane plantation; the lower orders ap-

pear very simple in their habits; all marry very young, and the promiscuous intercourse between the sexes which exists in the other states is unknown. Life and property are also very secure, and it is four years since a murder took place; a state of things very different from the other governments, where they occur almost daily, and are so common as generally to excite no attention.

Still there are many customs which would sound very strange to English ears. For instance, it is quite common for unmarried ladies and gentlemen in the most respectable families to sleep in the same room, and in beds almost touching each other. The free manner of speaking with either sex is not less surprising to a stranger, and what would be thought the most indecent expression in the lowest company of England, would be a pretty compliment to the most delicate young lady in Costa Rica. An elderly lady of the first respectability, one day told me, that she disliked the ladies of Guatemala, they were such hypocrites; and on my inquiring in what manner, she said, "A married lady in Costa Rica who makes a slip, will confess it to her husband, beg pardon, and promise better behaviour in future; whereas the ladies of Guatemala take every means to conceal it, and even deny it in the face of positive proof; and some husbands have been such fools as to get the aggressor assassinated, while in Costa Rica, it is only laughed at by both parties."

On the 20th of June, we visited Alhajuela, and Heridia, and remained at the former place two days, at the house of the chief of the state, San José Maria Alfaro, who has been long afflicted with gastritis.

After a great deal of persuasion, I was induced to prescribe for him, and with good result, though the case was rather beyond my hopes. I make no doubt that he would have died under the hands of the native doctors. There is only one really educated professional man in the country, Señ Montealegre, who studied at the University of Edinburgh ; but there are several foreign quacks, one of whom, an Englishman, says he has lost his diploma, a very common misfortune among foreign medical practitioners in Central America. Montealegre is a very well educated and gentlemanly man, but very indolent, and too well off to care about practising in a country where he would be so badly paid. A little sugar and coffee is grown at Alhajuela, which may contain 7000 to 8000 inhabitants. Heridia is about the same size, and coffee is grown in the neighbourhood, which produces about the fourth of the entire crop.

On the 23d, we visited the coffee and sugar estate of Don Juan José Lara, three leagues beyond Alhajuela, in a small valley. It seems to possess very fine and productive lands, and were the owner possessed of more capital, it might be made a most splendid estate: at present, no sugar is manufactured, the whole of the cane juice being made into crude spirits, which are drunk in the country. Next morning we returned to Alhajuela to breakfast, the ride being through a most picturesque country, to which the morning shadows and the white fleecy clouds, interspersed on all sides like snow, and the blue mountain tops peeping above them, gave the appearance of some fairy scene. We returned to San José after breakfast with the chief and his retinue, sadly tired with

our slow movements, as the chief stopped to talk and shake hands with nearly every peasant he met on the road.

The cultivation of coffee forms the present riches of Costa Rica, and has raised it to a state of prosperity unknown in any other part of Central America. It was begun about twelve years ago; a few plants having been brought from New Granada, and the first trial being successful, it has rapidly extended. All the coffee is grown in the plain of San José, where, as already observed, the three principal towns are situated — about two-thirds being produced in the environs of the capital, a fourth in those of Heridia, and the remainder at Alhajuela and its vicinity. The land which has been found, by experience, to be best suited to coffee, is a black loam, and the next best a dark red earth — soils of a brown and dull yellow colour being quite unsuitable. The plain of San José is mostly of the first class, being, like all the soils of Central America, formed with a large admixture of volcanic materials. Contrary to the experience of Java and Arabia Felix, coffee is here found to thrive much better, and produce a more healthy and equal berry, on plain land, than upon hills or undulating slopes, which doubtless arises from the former retaining its moisture better, and generally containing a larger deposit of loam.

I am inclined in a great measure to attribute the practice of sowing coffee in sloping land in Java, to the fact that the plains are generally occupied by the more profitable cultivation of sugar-cane. In Arabia, the plains are generally of a sandy nature (being lands which have, apparently, at no very distant geological

period formed the bed of the sea), which may account for the plantations existing only upon the low hills and slopes.

A coffee plantation in Costa Rica produces a crop the third year after it is planted, and is in perfection the fifth year. The coffee trees are planted in rows, with a space of about three yards between each and one between each plant, resembling in appearance hedges of the laurel bay. The weeds are cut down and the earth slightly turned with a hoe, three or four times in the year; and the plant is not allowed to increase above the height of six feet for the facility of gathering the fruit. The coffee tree here begins to flower in the months of March and April, and the berry ripens in the plain of San José in the months of November and December, strongly resembling a wild cherry in form and appearance, being covered with a similar sweet pulp.

As soon as the crimson colour assumed by the ripe fruit indicates the time for cropping, numbers of men, women, and children are sent to gather the berry, which is piled in large heaps to soften the pulp for forty-eight hours, and then placed in tanks through which a stream of water passes, where it is continually stirred to free it from the outer pulp; after which it is spread out upon a platform, with which every coffee estate is furnished, to dry in the sun; but there still exists an inner husk, which, when perfectly dry, is, in the smaller estates, removed by treading the berry under the feet of oxen; and, in the larger, by water mills, which bruise the berry slightly to break the husk, and afterwards separate it by fanners. The entire cost of producing a quintal (101$\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

British) of coffee, including the keeping of the estate in order, cleaning and pruning the plants, and gathering and preparing the berries, is, at the present rate of wages (two rials or about a shilling per day), calculated at two and a half dollars (equal to ten shillings); but the labourers are now hardly sufficient for working all the estates which are planted, so that the price may probably rise a little, though the present rate of payment enables the natives to live much better than has been their wont.

The price of coffee in San José during the months of February, March, and April, after which none can generally be met with, was, in 1846, about five dollars cash per quintal. The price of conveyance is about one dollar per quintal; the duty (which is collected for the repairs of the road) one rial more, so that the speculator makes, at least, ten rials, or about 20 per cent., by purchasing and sending the coffee to the port, on his outlay and charges; but it is often bartered for manufactured goods, and is also purchased beforehand — half being paid in imports, and half in cash to the grower. The voyage from Punta Arenas to Europe is at least five months, while that from Matina, the port on the N.E. coast, which is about equidistant from San José, or perhaps a league or two nearer, would not generally exceed six weeks, and the freight would cost 30*s.* or 40*s.* instead of 5*l.* a ton.

It is, however, said that the nature of the country between San José and Matina is so difficult, that a passable road for carts, such as is made to Punta Arenas, would cost an immense sum; and the continued rains that fall nearly all the year on the N.E. coast, render the climate so unhealthy, that it would

be difficult to induce the people to embark in such an undertaking on any terms. But the fine port of San Juan de Nicaragua is only about twenty leagues distant, while both Matina and Punta Arenas are twenty-five; and could arrangements be made with the state of Nicaragua, or should the British government take possession of it in accordance with their claim so often repeated on account of the Moschito Indians, it would immediately become the only port of Costa Rica, as the country between it and San José is said to be very practicable for a good road, and it is decidedly the finest port on the N.E. coast, tolerably healthy, and not above forty or fifty days' voyage from Europe by sailing vessels, and perhaps twenty by steamers. The largest coffee estates of Costa Rica are possessed by the family of Montealegre and Don Juan Moira. The principal of these I have examined; they appear to be very carefully and judiciously managed, possess good mills for cleaning and husking the coffee worked by water power; and annually produce upwards of 500 tons. The entire produce of the year 1846 amounted to about 3000 tons, and it is expected that the crop of 1847 will exceed 4000 tons, near which quantity it will probably continue, till the population gradually increases, the labourers, as already mentioned, being barely sufficient for the present cultivation. As the value at the present average price in the English market of 50*s.* a cwt. will give 200,000*l.*, the produce of the district will appear pretty considerable for a petty American state, possessing only 80,000 inhabitants, and just emerging from a half savage condition.

On the 10th of July we visited Cartago, the old capital of Costa Rica, which was ruined by the earthquake of the 2d of September, 1841. It is still nearly a mass of ruins, and has three churches demolished and only one standing; this building, which is sacred to the Virgin Mary, was saved, it is pretended, by her special interference. Her ladyship has, however, shown "horrid bad" taste in preserving it, for it is the smallest and ugliest church in the city, and its destruction would rather have been a benefit than otherwise, as it would have led to the construction of a new church, which could hardly have been so unseemly.

On the 12th, we ascended the old volcano of Cartago, which, though it continues to smoke a little, has not broken out within the memory of man, but has left terrible mementos of its earlier ravages — all the country for many miles round being a mass of stones, lava, and scoriæ. The previous night I had slept at a small hut belonging to cattle herds, about one-third of the way up the mountain, where I found it bitterly cold, though this is the hottest season of the year, and the people told me that snow often falls here in the month of January.

Starting before sunrise I reached the top of the mountain at 9 A. M.; during the ascent I was kept pretty warm by walking quick, but I had not been ten minutes on the top before my teeth were chattering with cold, and the Mestizo, who was my guide, seemed to suffer still more. The day was fortunately remarkably clear for the season of the year, and I succeeded in getting a glimpse of the Atlantic ocean. In the months of December and January I was told

that both it and the Pacific are clearly seen from the top. The view is, however, in other respects, probably more singular and picturesque at the present season: the whole landscape below is covered with white fleecy clouds which slowly move along the lower ground, followed by others like flocks of monster-shaped animals; while the fields and trees appear of a dark blue colour through frequent breaks, which give to them the aspect of motion, and to the clouds an aspect of rest (in the same manner as at sea the waters seem to move and the ship to stand still). But while this covering is placed over the low ground like a ragged sheet, the volcano and all the high mountains are perfectly clear, and the sky above is of an intense blue colour without the least speck or cloud. Leaving the guide, who said that no reward would tempt him to enter the crater, I proceeded alone to examine it; and perceiving a small rill of smoke issuing from the side of the grand crater, I was so eager to examine it that I descended without thinking of the difficulty of the re-ascent, and after satisfying my curiosity, I found this to be impossible from the slippery nature of the ground, composed as it is of ashes and cinders. After two or three attempts and several violent falls, I found that there was no resource left but to descend to the bottom of the crater, and seek my way out by another path. After descending some distance as best I could, I came to a perpendicular ledge of rocks at least twenty feet high, but, on examination, I perceived that if I could manage to get down the face of it and creep round the end of a large projecting rock, I should be able to reach a small break in the side by which

I might get to the bottom; so tying my riding-belt, neckcloth, and pocket handkerchief together, which I afterwards found to measure between twelve and thirteen feet, I fastened them, as best I could, to a point of rock, and lowered myself to within about a yard of the projecting ledge. While, however, I was looking how I might properly alight on it, the belt became detached from the rock, and I was precipitated forward. By a great effort I managed on touching the ledge to keep myself from falling down the precipice (which would certainly have been a singular death), and descending the crater walked to a hole in the centre, some hundred yards in diameter. I looked into it, but could see no bottom to the yawning abyss; and I then rolled in some stones, which fell from rock to rock till the noise was lost in the distance. I longed much for a rope to lower myself a short way down, but this was out of the question. The sides of the crater were formed of a dark blue granite, in many parts completely melted, and in others only cracked with heat; but there was no sulphur, nor any appearance of lime, clay, magnesia, or any of the metallic bases which are supposed to form volcanoes by their combustion when brought in contact with water. Having found a more easy path to ascend, I returned to my guide, five hours having been spent in the crater and in the descent and ascent. He appeared much surprised and rejoiced to see me — having, as he confessed, given up all hope of my return. He was very curious to know what I saw at the bottom; and I told him that I had talked with the Devil for two hours, who told me many curious stories which I must not repeat. He fully believed

me, and I heard him on the way home telling the story to several people, who shook their head and appeared fully to believe it also. One said, "Yes, it may well have happened if he is English." Descending the mountain I was seized with a sudden faintness, arising, I suppose, from the sudden change from a cold to a hot temperature, combined with the effect of violent exertion. Finding that I was ready to fall from my horse, which I had remounted at the hut of the cattle-herd, I got down, and was for about an hour deprived of all power of motion, though not of sense and speech; but I recovered from this singular attack, and proceeded onwards, reaching Cartago about sunset.

On the 14th I returned to San José, and on the 20th to Punta Arenas, where I had to wait a month before I could encounter a vessel to take me northwards. I was here attacked with a complaint peculiar to this country, viz. boils in the flesh, which commence with a large red swelling, and produce a degree of pain hardly to be conceived by those who have not felt it. Each boil lasts about eight days, during which time the patient is in a continual fever, and unable to sleep or do any thing. Several people had died here of dysentery, and I was successful in curing a number who were suffering severely from it, and among the rest the Aministrador of the customs. My principal receipt was an ounce of prepared chalk well mixed with the whites of half a dozen eggs.

On the 21st of August, I embarked on board the schooner Constellation, and reached Realejo in seven days, which was considered a fine passage at this season of the year. The port had just been blockaded

by the British corvette, Daphne, for claims made against the government of the state on the part of three British subjects — Messrs. Bridge, Manning, and Glenton. The miserable government, not having a farthing to pay them, agreed to give up the tobacco monopoly for four years to settle the claims of the two last, and to pay Mr. Bridge from the first receipt of the custom house at Realejo: thus, the government was only left with the monopoly of spirits and the customs' revenue collected at Saint John, though the whole of the revenue is never sufficient to meet the current expenses; and they were at that moment engaged in a war with the state of Honduras. Next morning I proceeded to Chinendega, where I stayed at Mr. Bridge's house.

The government of Nicaragua had for some time been urged by that of Saint Salvador to assist them against Guatemala, and had pretended to comply about twenty days previously, sending forward 1000 men; but instead of assisting San Salvador, they were conducted against Honduras, in which state, the Grand Marshal Fonsecus, who is supreme in Nicaragua, hoped to effect a revolution. But it turned out very differently, for the invaders being attacked by a much inferior force of Honduras troops, fled in the most disgraceful manner, the soldiers throwing away their arms, and the officers their new uniforms, which they had made up in bundles to put on and exhibit in the capital of Honduras. The town of Chinendega was full of the runaways, the dirtiest mob of ragged rascals I ever beheld; none had an entire shirt, and as for trousers, some had only one leg, the other being torn away. As usual in Central American

wars, all the men ran away to the forest, leaving the women to take care of the houses, judging, it would appear, that as they could not be taken for soldiers they would only be improved by a little communication with the troops. There was not one labouring man in Chinendega.

We returned to Realejo early on the morning of the 30th, and immediately re-embarked with the master of the schooner, but as the wind was dead ahead, we did not sail. On the following morning, we made an excursion to a lemon grove in one of the creeks of the harbour. The lemon trees were no doubt planted in the time of the Spanish government, but were now in a completely wild state, mixed with the indigenous forest trees. Near the grove was a large plot of land covered with a long rank grass but free from trees, although all the surrounding country was most densely wooded. It is called by the natives *tierra encantada* (the enchanted land), and it is difficult to find a reason for its not being wooded, as all the lands cleared in this state, when left a few years without cultivation, return to their original condition of dense forest. The wind becoming fair a little before sunset, we got up the anchors and proceeded out of the harbour. At the entrance we met H. B. M.'s corvette, Daphne, the lieutenant of which came on board: the captain had, it appears, raised the blockade of the port of the Union after remaining only a week, and having not even received any answer to the letters he sent to the government of San Salvador, making a claim of about 100,000 dollars for seizures made of British property. It was a foolish business, and the natives were very triumphant — remarking, that it is easy

to tire out the English by a little firmness. Unfortunately, it is the custom of the captains of H. B. M.'s vessels always to find some excuse for not visiting ports where they are not likely to get a good freight of specie; and though the claim against the state of San Salvador has been adjusted for more than six years up to this period, December, 1846, no means have been taken to enforce it, nor has any vessel of war appeared since the visit of the Daphne, in August, 1844.

We anchored at the entrance of the Union harbour on the night of the 1st of September, and on the 2d, at 4 A. M. in front of the village of the Union. After breakfast we went on shore without waiting for the visit, and so far from finding fault, the captain of the port thanked us for delivering the despatches from the Nicaragua government; we also found that they had no boat to come on board with, so that we saved them the dignity of squatting down in a canoe. On the 15th of September, we ascended the extinct volcano of Conchagua, which though not a high mountain, has, from its position, the most magnificent view I have ever seen from any hill in Central America, or any other part of the world. The panorama extends for more than fifty leagues around, embracing the bay of Conchagua and the islands around it, the ports of the Union, San Lorenzo and Realejo, and the cities of San Miguel, Camayagua and Leon, and a large part of the states of San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. I counted eighteen volcanoes, and there were so many hills, mountains, and streams, that I could not attempt to number them. On the top is a singular place covered with green grass, and a number

of pine trees, showing a climate averaging more than ten degrees below the plain at the foot. How the fir trees got there is a mystery, as there are none nearer than about thirty leagues off on the mountains of Honduras. The plain pleased me so much, that if I have ever again to reside any time at the Union, I shall get a hut made on the top of this mountain, where a temperate climate may always be enjoyed, resembling the table lands of Guatemala and Costa Rica. This mountain is plainly of volcanic origin, as the whole surrounding country is covered with cinders, which have been ejected from it; but it must be of a great age, as no crater is now visible. Probably its eruptions ceased before the commencement of the volcano of San Miguel, which may be about twelve leagues distant in a direct line, as it appears that two active vents cannot exist so near each other.

On the 8th of October I was surprised at seeing a great stir in the village of the Union; the men began to escape as quickly as possible, and the women to run about like troubled spirits. I asked several what was the matter, but they only shook their heads and replied (quia sabe) "who knows;" at last one said, (hay una revolucion fuerte) "there is a great revolution:" some advised me to escape to the woods with the rest, but having no cause to fear one faction more than another, I positively declined to do so. About 3 o'clock P. M. our speculations were brought to a close by the arrival of General Cabanas with about 200 troops. The government soldiers having made their escape, leaving their arms behind, he quietly took possession of the place, and having

come to the public house kept by Dona Lorenza Zapata, where I was residing, he immediately asked me to what nation I belonged, and remarked that I was happy in not having occasion to fear any party, or the effects of any revolution.

On their arrival, Cabanas and his officers gave out that there was a revolution in the capital of San Salvador, and that the government of Malespein was overturned, but this turned out not to be the case; in fact, they were flying from that government, which they were informed intended to put them to death. Having chartered the British brig Diana to take them to Realejo, they left on the 11th, having conducted themselves with the greatest moderation, and taken nothing without paying for it. Cabanas is a smart little man, of a mild address, and has about the best character of any who have mixed in the revolutions of Central America: though often holding high commands, he has always remained poor, and is one of the very few whose hands have never been stained by plunder. He was accompanied by a son of the late General Marazan, a very gentlemanly and good-looking young man, and apparently well educated for the country; also by Colonel Banas, the late governor of San Miguel, a good officer, but far from possessing the mild and moderate disposition of General Cabanas. Shortly after the Diana had left the harbour, about 100 government troops arrived, pretending to be in pursuit; but as it appeared that they halted about two leagues' distance, till they heard that Cabanas was off, it was pretty plain they were of opinion that discretion was the better part of valour.

I had for some time been waiting for the Constellation to proceed on to Iztapa, the port of Guatemala, but this hope being at an end, I determined to proceed by land, and having after a great deal of difficulty hired a mule and purchased a horse, on the 5th of October, I set off for San Miguel on my way to Guatemala; but remembering, after I had gone about eight leagues on the journey, that I had forgotten some letters, I returned to the Union, where I arrived at 9 P. M., most thoroughly drenched by the rain, which had poured in torrents for three hours. At 4 next morning I again started on my journey, breakfasted at San Antonia, and arrived at San Miguel about noon. At the request of Messrs. Medina and Gerel, I remained a day at San Miguel, to enable the latter to write to the British Consul regarding the forced contributions required from him by the Government, property to the amount of 10,000 dollars having been seized upon his refusal to pay the contribution; and as this was a part of some goods purchased by him from some English merchants in Valparaiso, he was anxious to make it appear as British property, and as such, to prefer a claim through H. B. M.'s Consul General. I however told him I thought the plan would not succeed, as the Consul must require positive proof of the ownership before making his claim. Having got my passport *viséd*, I again started at 8 A. M. on the 9th, in company with Don Juakin Saynes; at noon we reached an indigo estate called El Puerto, where we rested two hours, and again started, travelling through a deep forest totally deserted, without one single habitation. We were several

times nearly losing our road, and had to go three leagues round to avoid the lava thrown out two months before by the volcano of San Miguel, which was still glowing and smoking in all parts. At the edge it formed a wall of about twenty feet high, composed of rugged scoriæ, but so hot that it could not be approached. It appears to cover from two to three leagues square, and is probably several hundred feet deep in some parts. The lava is entirely hid by large rugged masses of cinders, which in some places form ridges like low hills, and in others sharp spires of twenty or thirty feet high; it is also thickly covered with burnt trees and detached stones, much like those now lying on the surrounding ground, which would appear to have floated on the liquid lava, as an iron weight floats in a vessel full of quicksilver. The part of the lava next the volcano is at least five leagues distant from its foot, and more than double that distance from the crater whence it was ejected, so that the force with which it was thrown must have been terrific. Luckily, the part of the country where the lava was thrown was quite uninhabited, so that the only injury it did was in killing the cattle and wild animals which roam in that part of the native forest, and in blocking up the mule track.

Night overtook us in this dreary forest, but about 7 P. M. we met some people, who informed us of the vicinity of the town of Usulatang, which we reached shortly afterwards. Don Juakin was far too ceremonious to seek for lodgings in this country, but at last he found them in the house of a widow of decayed family. At daylight we started again,

travelling all day through the same interminable forest, and meeting only two desolate huts till 3 P. M., when we reached the river Lempa, the largest river in the State, and, next to Saint John, the largest in Central America. It is capable of floating a line of battle ship for many miles, but possesses a bad bar at the mouth. We slept at a small rancho belonging to a cattle estate of Don Jorje Ponce, who was there with several ladies of his family.

At daylight we started again, travelling still through a nearly uninhabited country, though in some few places cleared and cultivated, and much more varied than the two last days' journey. At 2 P. M. we reached the town of San Vicente, where Don Juakin left me, remaining at the house of Don Jorje Ponce. There was a young man, a native of Belize, in Mr. Ponce's employment, of the name of Evans, who, to my no small amusement, asked me in Spanish, From what part of Spain do you come? I replied to him in the same language, that I was a native of Great Britain, and inquired what part of Central America he was born in, which appeared to put him sadly out, and made Don Juakin laugh heartily at his expense. After about half an hour's delay, I continued my journey alone, dining at the town of Atapetitan, the district where all the tobacco used in the State is grown, the lands being very fine and well suited for the article. It is a strict government monopoly, all the growers being required to deliver it, at one rial a pound, to the government, which resells it at two rials. Till sold, it is lodged here in a warehouse built for the purpose; but the government have for the last two years

neglected to pay the growers, and no one will this year deliver their tobacco to the receiving officers, so that the monopoly will become a dead letter. At the present moment (December, 1846) the government are about establishing the monopoly on a more just as well as effective footing. The tobacco is said to be of very fine quality, and equal to that of Havannah for making cigars; but, as I do not smoke, I cannot pretend to give an opinion in the matter.

Proceeding on our journey we were benighted, and obliged to stop at a small Indian village on the top of a hill called Jiboa, a league and a half beyond Atapetitan, where I was very well received by the Alcalde, who conducted me to an uninhabited hut, and procured grass for my two beasts. At daylight I again started, in spite of a drizzling rain, which soon became heavy, making the road so slippery that my horse fell at every step, so that I was obliged to stop at Cojutepeque, which we reached at 8 A. M. Here I was forced to remain all day, as the rain continued to fall in torrents, but I was most hospitably entertained in the house of an Indian, the women running about to get me every thing for which I expressed a wish.

Cojutepeque is a large town, with 15,000 inhabitants, mostly Indians, who are among the most quiet and industrious in the State. It possesses three churches in no way remarkable. All the houses are made of mud, and placed according to the general custom in Central America. We started again at daylight, and breakfasted at a small village called San Martin, five leagues from Cojutepeque, and six from the city of San Salvador, where we

arrived at 4 P. M. By good luck there was an inn or public house here, called Fonda de Montoya, kept by a woman of that name. This is a rare convenience even in the principal cities of Central America, and the innkeeper, a dark mulatto woman, told me that she could not make a living by the inn alone, so that she was obliged also to keep a shop to sell spirits, wines, and sweet cordials. Here, for the first time since leaving San Miguel, I was furnished with a separate sleeping room and a bedstead. A bed would be too great a luxury to expect in any part of Central America.

The city of San Salvador, capital of the state of the same name, and also of the federal Republic of Central America previous to its dissolution, is, like most of the towns in America, regularly laid out, but has a mean appearance, none of the houses having more than a ground floor. It is much inferior in appearance and extent either to Guatemala or Leon. None of the buildings, not even the churches, are worthy of notice. The little trade which it transacts is all concentrated in some fifty shops round the principal square, which, as in all Spanish American towns, is the place where every thing is brought for sale. The situation, however, is most splendid, the city being built in a rich valley surrounded with an amphitheatre of low hills, and watered by a fine river; and though from November to May more than a very slight shower never falls in Central America (and even that but rarely), the dews are so heavy in the neighbourhood of San Salvador that the grass, so far from being burnt up in the dry season, as in most other

parts, is equally verdant all the year round. The climate in all respects is most delightful, — never chilly; and though sufficient for the production of all tropical plants, never oppressively hot, the temperature only varying a few degrees in the year. In the evening I had a long talk with the brother of President Malespein; he seemed rather a well-informed man for the country, and spoke in very complimentary terms of the English. He is a dark-coloured and certainly a very ill-looking Mestizo, though rather better looking than his brother.

Finding a difficulty in hiring mules direct for Guatemala, I proceeded on to Sonsonate, starting on the morning of the 15th, and arriving late on the same day. The distance is twenty leagues, two of which are nothing but the bed of a wild mountain torrent.

Stopping at a cattle estate called the asienda of Guaramal, I was, for the first time in Central America, refused entertainment by the surly steward of the estate. I took care to tell him my opinion, and proceeding onwards, breakfasted at a hut on the road side. In case the meaning of Central American hospitality may be mistaken, I may explain that it merely means leave to lie down in the corridor of the house like a dog, and to purchase what may be had in the house to eat. At 4 P. M. I passed a village called the Port of Guamaka, and a little after sunset, the town called, as usual, City of Isolco, which is a collection of mud huts, with 2000 or 3000 inhabitants. At 9 P. M. we reached Sonsonate, and after seeking all about for some place to sleep in, we were at last admitted

into the house of Don Eugenio Oyarsan, a Peruvian, and administrator of the custom-house. Throughout Central America it is quite easy, in some towns, to obtain lodgings, the people seeming glad to gain a few rials by letting them; while in others, as San Miguel, Sonsonate, and Guatemala, the poorest people, who have not perhaps a dollar in the world, will not admit any person into their house, whatever they may offer to pay, without a special recommendation. The city of Sonsonate (which word in the Indian dialect means seven rivers) is a pretty little village buried amidst groves of cocoa-nut and other fruit-trees. It shows many symptoms of decay, and five out of twelve churches are nearly in ruins. It has a fine river, with a bridge lately erected by private subscription; the neighbouring country is, perhaps, the richest in all Central America, and capable of producing all the most valuable articles cultivated in tropical countries; but the produce is yearly decreasing under the present disorganised and insecure government, and the few sugar and indigo estates which still exist are fast falling into decay.

Here is produced the celebrated gum improperly called "balsam of Peru," from its having been sent to Lima by the Spaniards previous to its exportation to Europe; also vanilla, cocoa, coffee, rice, sugar, indigo, saffron, tobacco, and Indian-rubber. The city is one of the cleanest in Central America, but has a very desolate appearance. It may still contain from 5000 to 6000 inhabitants.

I was most kindly received by Don Victor Lenouvel, a French merchant, who possesses nearly all the little foreign trade of Sonsonate, and who is

universally noted in all parts of Central America for his hospitality and liberality; and by Dr. Drivon, a native of the West India island of St. Lucia, and consequently a British subject, though born of French parents. He possesses the best sugar estate in Central America, which he took me to see. It was in most respects equal to the best estates in Java and the East Indies; it would be capable of annually producing a thousand tons of sugar, but the Doctor unfortunately had not capital to carry it on, and it has been so much injured by the continued revolutions and disturbances of the state, that it will not fetch the amount for which it is mortgaged.

Having, by Dr. Drivon's kind assistance, procured a couple of good mules, and found a person to take care of the horse and mule I brought from the Union, I again started on my journey at 7 A. M., on the 17th, with a new servant, the one I brought with me having started off the moment we arrived, without giving me any notice (as is not unfrequently done by servants in all parts of Spanish America) to the port of Acajoutla, of which he was a native.

Ascending a steep mountain, we passed the villages of Nahuisalco, Salcuatitan, and Apaneca, respectively three, four, and six leagues distant. At the last-named village, which lies at the top of the mountain ridge and very cold, we breakfasted, having on the road had a fine view of the volcano of Isolco, which is always in a state of eruption.

This volcano rose from a plain seventy-seven years ago, and has ever since continued increasing in size. It is always burning, but does no harm to the neighbouring country. Previous to the year 1769 there

existed a fine cattle estate upon the present site of the volcano; about the end of 1768 the people resident upon it were alarmed by frequent earthquakes and noises under ground, which became more violent till the 23d of February, when the earth suddenly opened about half a mile from the house, on the asienda (estate), and vomited flames and smoke. The inhabitants fled in terror, abandoning all they possessed; but the cattle-herds, who of necessity visited the vicinity, reported that the flames and smoke increased daily, and they shortly devoured the buildings of the estate, the site of which is now occupied by a part of the crater.

This volcano, and Jorollo in Mexico, are the only ones which have originated since the discovery of America. Unlike all the other volcanoes, it may be said to be in a continued state of eruption, not only ejecting flames and smoke like the mountains of Pacaya and Old Guatemala, but large quantities of stones, cinders, and ashes. Its explosions are regular, occurring exactly every sixteen minutes three seconds. When close to the mountain, as in the ascent to Salcuatitan, I heard loud reports like the discharge of a park of artillery, and immediately after a dense cloud of smoke rose from the mountain in gradual ascent, and passed off with the wind, and stones were seen to fall and roll down the sides. Viewing it at night (as I have frequently done) from Sonsonate, the explosion is followed by a red glare from the volcano like that from a smith's furnace, and the stones may be seen to rise a great height red hot; the greater number falling back into the crater, but a part of them rolling down the sides of the mountain.

Between the explosions, the mountain appears perfectly quiet and emits no smoke or flames; the period between the explosions is said to be exactly regular, but at some periods they are much more violent than at others; at present they are but slightly heard in Sonsonate, which is three leagues distant from the volcano, and are sometimes said to be inaudible, while at others they are regularly heard like the discharge of a large gun a short distance off. The volcano has now attained the height of at least 700 or 800 feet from the base to the top, and its height is constantly increasing; but even should its eruptions continue as at present without intermission, which seems improbable from the analogy of other volcanoes, many ages will be required before it can reach the height of the volcano of San Miguel, or those of Old Guatemala. It has never ejected any lava, but when the wind blows from it towards Sonsonate, it is said to disperse a very fine powder, which is inhaled in the lungs, to the serious injury of many people. In removing the tiles from the roofs of houses, a deposit of the powder has been discovered underneath some inches in thickness. As this mountain is so interesting a phenomenon, I may mention that my information regarding its origin was derived from Don Manuel Zapata, a native of Sonsonate, and a man of the best character and fully entitled to credit: he was ten years old when the mountain commenced its formation.

At 2 P. M. we passed the town of Ahuachapan, which is finely situated at the top of a most beautiful undulating plain nearly four leagues square. It is clear of trees, and covered (it is said) all the year round

with green grass, which at present is very rich and luxuriant: this, however, was to be expected, as it was just the end of the rainy season. The town may contain 2000 or 3000 inhabitants, and has a few decent houses close to the principal square, the remainder being merely mud huts; the situation is very good, and the climate warm but temperate; the plain, which is one of the richest in Central America, could easily support a population of 50,000 inhabitants without the necessity of importing food for their consumption.

At sunset we passed the deep ravine through which flows the Rio Paz (river of peace), which divides the State of San Salvador from that of Guatemala, and at 8 P. M. we reached the asienda of Cocos (cocoanuts), where we slept. This is merely the residence of the manager of a cattle estate; it has no water within a league, and is destitute of any cultivation. We started again a little before sunrise, and breakfasted at the town (villa) of Zalpatagua, a distance of four leagues from the Cocoa nuts. The change of scene on entering the state of Guatemala is very remarkable: indeed, it is a singular circumstance that nature, not man, appears to have separated the different states of Central America, each of which is entirely of a different geological and physical character from the rest; and the change from the green undulating hills of San Salvador, to the wild precipitous mountains and rocks of Guatemala, is most striking. Zalpatagua would in most parts of the world be called a miserable little village, and the people seem to partake of the rugged and sullen nature of their country. Seeking for a hut to prepare our breakfast, we were

not received with the kind and mild answer, "como no" (certainly), on asking if we might rest a little at one of the huts, but, "no hay onde" (there is no room), uttered in a surly and forbidding tone, and we had to repeat the request at several huts before we could obtain permission. Continuing our journey, and passing over five leagues of a most desolate country covered with cinders, stones, and broken masses of rock, at noon we reached the Cuesta de Leon (hill of the lion), a most steep and rugged ascent through the midst of a vast native forest, celebrated as the haunt of robbers, and again descending a precipitous rugged hill, at 2 P. M. we rested at a village situated in a deep ravine surrounded by huge perpendicular rocks, called the Oratoria or Colleja de Sylva. All the inhabitants are mule drivers, and can when required turn out 500 mules among them; they carry nearly all the merchandise which passes between the States of Guatemala, and San Salvador and when most of the goods for Guatemala were landed at Acajantla, the port of Sonsonate, they were continually employed. Now their business is not so good, though they have a good deal to do in conveying sugar from Santa Ana and Ahuachapan, for the supply of Guatemala, and bring back the manufactures of that state. At 4 P. M. we proceeded again on our journey through a dense forest quite unbroken by the hand of man, but varied by a number of streams of water breaking through its solitude, and at sunset passing over (I believe) the only bridge erected by the Spaniards in this country, we reached the village (Puello) of the Esclavos, and stopped at a hut that served for the Cabildo, a public building existing in

all Spanish towns for the accommodation of travellers, the administration of justice, meeting of the municipality, &c.

This is a miserable dirty little village, though beautifully situated in a rich valley, watered by a fine river. Before sunrise we started again, and at 7 A.M. reached the town (villa) of Cuajinequilapa, which next to Ahnachapau is the largest town on the road from Sonsonate to Guatemala, and may perhaps contain from 2000 to 3000 inhabitants. The only decent house in the town belongs to a man appointed by government to examine the masses of merchandize passing this road, and remit a statement of it to the custom-house at Guatemala, in order to prevent its clandestine introduction; all the rest of the residences are merely mud huts. Passing the Corral de Araña, a league further on our journey, we reached a small population (rancheria) called the Corral de Piedra where we breakfasted. Here is a handsome residence belonging to the proprietor of the land, on which the population is situated; shortly afterwards we passed over a magnificent plain, containing a beautiful lake, and forming part of an immense estate belonging to Don Jorge Ponce, one of the largest landed proprietors in Central America. This is called the plain of Mal Pays, from the supposed bad disposition of the people who inhabit the surrounding country; it is clean and covered with verdant herbage, but at one end there is a thick wood called "Borsque de Ladrones" (the robbers' forest). At 1 P.M. we reached the village of Serro Rodondo, or Los Arcos, (the Arches); which latter name is derived from a long series of arches built to keep

the level in conveying water to a neighbouringe state. Stopping a short time at a collection of huts called Los Verdes (the green pastures), a little beyond Los Arcos, and again resuming our journey and passing two collections of huts named Trijanes, and the Haeienda of Crasola, we reached the town (villa) of Guadaloupe at 5 P. M.; from the hill, which we descended previous to entering the town, there is a fine view of the city of Guatemala, the numerous churches of which, seen amidst groves of trees, have a very magnificent appearance.

Passing through the town of Guadaloupe, we proceeded amidst a heavy shower of rain over an open undulating plain totally uncultivated, but covered with fine grass, on which large herds of cattle were browzing; and entered Guatemala by the gate called Guarda Provincial, a little before sunset. After seeking about for lodgings an entire hour without success, I was forced, on the night setting in, to take up my quarters at one of the miserable public houses called mesones, and serving as the residences of mule drivers and native petty dealers. My dormitory was a small dirty room without a window; and its furniture comprised an old deal table, a broken chair, and a raw ox skin, stretched on a frame to serve as a place for sleeping, here called a bed, though possessing none of the requisites usually considered as belonging to that luxurious piece of furniture in Europe, and as hard as stone.

CHAP. III.

DESCRIPTION OF GUATEMALA. — GENERAL CARRERA. — JOURNEY TO OLD GUATEMALA AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY AND ITS VICINITY. — DEPARTURE FROM GUATEMALA. — DANGEROUS MISTAKE. — JOURNEY TO THE UNION. — WAR BETWEEN SAN SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA. — DEPARTURE FROM THE UNION. — ARRIVAL AT REALEJO. — WARLIKE OPERATIONS. — ACAJANTLA. — TAKEN FOR SPIES. — ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM SONSONATE. — A NIGHT IN THE WOODS. — ARRIVAL AT GUATEMALA. — INSURRECTION OF 2ND FEB. 1845.

In spite of being pretty tired, as might be expected after a journey of 130 odd leagues over Central American roads with a rough trotting mule, the nature of my couch combined with the attacks of innumerable fleas, and all sorts of biting insects, proved as effectual an antidote of sleep as ever did the magic rod of Mercury.

At daylight I got up in a complete fever, and found the old man who passed for my servant, (though really he had served me in nothing but to show me the road,) sleeping like a hog on the pavement outside my door, wrapped up in my poncho, which is a long figured blanket, with a hole in the middle to put the head through, and an indispensable article with all the natives of Central America. With some difficulty I roused him up, and after a great deal of explanation, got, in about two hours time, a cup of what was called coffee, though it had no resemblance to that pleasant drink as prepared in

other parts of the world, a plate of a description of black kidney beans, called frijoles, and scraps of meat fried in rancid hogs' lard; the two latter I sent away, and after wasting another hour in explanations succeeded at last in obtaining two boiled eggs and a roll of bread. The woman who brought them was in agony at not having been allowed to daub them over with hogs' lard, and could not help exclaiming, "*que jeute san los Ingleses!*" (what extraordinary people these English are!) I may mention that the word "*Ingles*" (Englishman) is applied to all strangers except Spaniards, in Central America.

This being Sunday, the day was ushered in with a strange jingling of bells, letting off crackers, and a great noise and bustle in the streets.

Having washed and dressed as well as I could, I proceeded to see Mr. George Skinner, of the firm of Klee, Skinner and Co., for whom I had a letter of introduction. I was very well received, and he most kindly set out with me to look for lodgings for the few days I was to remain in Guatemala; but as none could be got till the middle of the week, he very obligingly offered to make me a bed in the sitting room of his house, which I could not but accept, as it was too much to think of passing another night in the meson. Mr. Skinner afterwards introduced me to the French consul, (to whom I had brought a letter on business,) and a number of the prinicipal families.

The present city of Guatemala, sometimes called New Guatemala, can boast of no antiquity; having been only commenced in the year 1776, (three years

after the earthquake of 1773, which partially destroyed Old Guatemala, the former capital) in the valley of Hermita, where previously there only existed a small Indian village. Its situation is very fine, being at the end of a plain about twenty miles long and six broad, and surrounded on the greater portion of three sides by a deep ravine, which by a little skill might be rendered nearly impassable to an enemy.

Its situation, however, commands but few advantages beyond a fine appearance, and natural strength. The country in the neighbourhood, though not sterile, is remarkably deficient in water, which must be brought from five leagues distance, at a great expense, by a long artificial watercourse, the level being maintained by an immense number of arches, varying in height where the ground is depressed; but, as there is not a sufficient supply of water for irrigation, the country round is burnt up during the dry season, and is nearly all uncultivated, vegetables and fruits being carried by the Indians from the neighbourhood of Old Guatemala, which is ten leagues distant, and even fodder for the horses from Mizco, a distance of three leagues. It is also most disadvantageously situated for commerce, being seventy leagues distant from the nearest port on the Atlantic Ocean, called Isabel, which also can only be entered by small vessels; and twenty-three leagues from Iztapa, the nearest port of the Pacific, which is, besides, nothing more than an open roadstead, having a tremendous surf continually breaking upon the beach; and as no boats are kept for hire, vessels proceeding there without proper surf-boats for landing

their cargoes, are almost certain to lose some boat loads.

A short time ago a Spanish vessel there lost her longboat full of goods, and four men who were on board; and even with a proper surf-boat and every possible care, part of the cargo is generally damaged on landing.

The number of fine churches, and the trees and gardens interspersed among the houses, give Guatemala a very handsome appearance when viewed from a short distance; but on entering the city the illusion is dispelled, for, although the streets are wide, straight, and very clean, the houses have a mean and dismal appearance, none having more than a ground story, and the windows being small, with iron gratings.

This city, like nearly all in Spanish America, is regularly divided into blocks of 100 Spanish yards square, called cuadros; nearly all the streets having exactly that distance between them, and all being exactly parallel or cutting each other at right angles. Each house in the block generally forms another square, having rooms on two or three sides, and on the remaining, stables, offices, and a fountain of water. Some of the houses occupy a segment containing a quarter of the whole block. They are uniformly built of stone, the corners, doors, windows, &c., being hewn, and the remainder of the walls plastered and whitewashed, and the roof covered with tiles similar to those used in some very old English houses; the inside of the square has a wide corridor under the same roof with the rooms, which are uniformly floored with square flags made of burnt

red clay, which in a short time become broken and very uneven, the hollows forming a harbour for myriads of fleas, which almost devour a stranger, or at least give him no rest day or night, till he has become habituated to the nuisance. None of the rooms are even carpeted, and in most houses the furniture is very scanty and ordinary, a few of the rich traders and the French consul, being the only persons who have their rooms furnished similarly to those in respectable European houses. The plaza (market-place) is a square, equal in size to four of the blocks which compose the city, having on one of the four sides, the cathedral, clerical university, and archbishop's palace; on the opposite, the government house and some of the law courts; another of the two sides being occupied by the guardhouse, barracks, and some shops, and the remaining side by a corridor full of shops, where more business is done than in any other part of the city.

In the centre is a fountain, with the figure of a whale ejecting a stream of water from its mouth. The market-place would have a handsome appearance were it not spoiled by a number of wooden sheds in the centre, which are occupied by different petty dealers, who pay a rent to the corporation.

The government and guardhouses are large buildings, consisting of only a ground story, and present nothing remarkable; but the cathedral is one of the most chaste, and for its size, one of the finest buildings in the world. It was built under the superintendence of an Italian architect, but unfortunately the outside has never been finished, two side turrets being yet deficient, which gives it an incomplete appear-

ance. The front is of the Ionian order, built of hewn sandstone, not unlike that of Portland, the pillars being fluted and the cornices richly ornamented. The entrance consists of three magnificent aisles, which traverse the entire length of the building, 120 yards, with Gothic arches of white sandstone, beautifully carved. Unlike most Roman Catholic churches, it is unincumbered with gaudy ornaments, the figures and pictures of saints being all put against the walls of the two outer aisles, the whole body of the church, which is paved with marble slabs, being clear up to the further end, where the altar, sacristy, &c., are placed. It is not nearly the largest of the sixty-two churches of Guatemala; that of San Francisca being almost double the size, but not built in so chaste a style, and also much injured by the earthquake of 1830, which has likewise shaken several of the other churches, though but slightly. Many of the churches are remarkably fine buildings, and would be admired in any part of the world, though a particular description would not be generally interesting. They are all decorated with numerous shrines, and figures of male and female saints gaudily dressed and adorned with tinsel. Formerly, there were seven large convents, which were all abolished during the rule of Morazan, and their revenues appropriated by government. The greater part of them now form barracks for soldiers: one of the smaller ones of the order of St. Domingo has lately been re-established; but the government refused to assign it any revenues so that it is supported by voluntary contributions and the labour of the nuns.

Guatemala, like all cities founded by the Spaniards, is most liberally supplied with public fountains, of which there are about fifty in different parts of the city. Many of them are covered with handsome stone buildings, and not only supply the poorer classes with water, but are partitioned off into stone troughs for washing clothes. All the respectable houses have also fountains in their yards; and though the water has, with immense labour, been brought a distance of twelve miles, it is most abundant, of excellent quality, and never fails even in the driest seasons.

The inhabitants of Guatemala appear to have little of the desire for public amusements seen in most cities: the only places for public exhibitions are a small half-open theatre, and a building for the exhibition of bull-fights; but they are only occasionally opened on Sundays and the holidays of the Roman Catholic church. Concerts, balls, and other public amusements are unknown; almost the only recreation of the natives, being the religious processions, at which the figures of the saints are paraded and great quantities of fire-works let off; of these, there are two or three nearly every month. Visiting is rare among the inhabitants, but when a visit is made, a great deal of ceremony is practised. Refreshments are never offered to the visitor, nor are invitations to dinner given, except upon public occasions and marriages.

There is not one hotel, nor even a decent public house in Guatemala, the more respectable natives always going to the house of some acquaintance. A stranger, arriving without introductions, can only

go to a sort of very low public houses, denominated "mesones," which are intended for the accommodation of mule drivers, cattle herds, and petty retail dealers, somewhat resembling in arrangement the caravanseras of the East. A stranger will in every respect be better entertained in most Indian villages, than in Guatemala.

Nearly all the commerce of the state is centered in this city, and the number of shops exceeds, it is said, 300; but the principal trade is transacted by twenty or thirty persons, who are called importing merchants, and who have correspondents in England, Spain, or France, who ship to them assortments of goods which they retail out. No wholesale dealers exist; the largest of their merchants will sell a piece of calico, or a yard of woollen goods; and nearly all the shops are general stores containing every article, however trifling, of general consumption.

Guatemala contains a college, which is said to have attained some celebrity in the time of the Spaniards; at present, it is not equal to a second rate school in Europe, and none of the professors could pass as a Scotch parish schoolmaster. It has also an ecclesiastical college for the education of priests, and another school (also called a college) for younger boys, about equal to a European infant school, and one or two private teachers, one of them a Frenchman of the name of Domingaez, being a man of some learning. The best school was that of Mr. Crow, expelled at the instigation of the bishop in April 1846.

Carrera has just finished the erection of a new fort, planned by a person called an English engineer, but really, as I am informed, a native of Jamaica.

It is built on a small mound at the south end of the city, but completely commanded by another height about 1000 yards distant; and, though it mounts about twenty guns, ten to thirty pounders, it could easily be destroyed by one or two properly placed on the neighbouring height, over which the road passes, and which is quite undefended; but the object of this fort would appear to be to overawe Guatemala, not to defend it from an enemy.

The soldiers are a most ill-looking, dirty set of ruffians, whose appearance in the streets of London would ensure them a place in the watch-house. Carrera has adopted the British colour (scarlet) for clothing his troops, but the red jackets are few in number, and only put on upon feast days, and other extraordinary occasions; and, even then, the strange figures of the men, all clothed in jackets of one size, none of which of course fit the wearer, make them look like a band of robbers who had dressed themselves in stolen clothes. The officers dress themselves, according to fancy, in strange nondescript uniforms, the most respectable resembling English footmen out of place. Carrera has got an English general's coat, which he puts on upon great occasions; but the tailor could not be expected to suit his strange mis-shapen figure, so that he resembles a scarecrow with a coat pinned on. The dress of an Indian chief would look natural upon him, but an European uniform is most ridiculous.

Guatemala possesses the only decent cemetery I have seen in any part of Spanish America; and what is most remarkable, it has a separate place for the burial of persons not of the Roman Catholic religion.

The principal burial ground is a square of about 300 yards, enclosed by thick stone walls fifteen feet high; in the wall are some thousand niches, in which those who are interred in coffins are placed, the charge being four dollars each; as soon as the niche is filled, the entrance is plastered up and the name and date written outside. These niches are calculated to be filled in six years' time, when the first filled will be opened, and gradually all the rest, the bones being thrown into square holes built on purpose, at the four corners of the cemetery, to make room for new occupants; those, however, who can pay twenty dollars, are entitled to a piece of ground for a separate grave, which is not to be touched, and they may if they choose, fence it in. Those who are too poor, even to pay the four dollars, are interred in the ground in the centre, generally without coffins; but their bones will be dug up as soon as the ground is required again. Interring in churches is now prohibited, but the friends of the deceased may, after the body has been a year in the niche, open it and convey his bones to a church. This, however, I am told, is never done; as, though very foolish expenses are incurred at funerals, the dead are never thought of after.

Adjoining the cemetery is the hospital, the only one in Central America, and which is kept up in a manner not inferior to the best in London, having four large rooms well ventilated, neat and clean, for the poor, and separate apartments for those who can afford to pay, — a plan which might well be copied in more advanced countries. Both this and the cemetery, are the work of the Spanish govern-

ment; but the part for the burial of those not of the Roman Catholic religion was set apart by President Galnez, and affords a proof of his enlightened policy.

Guatemala is entered by six gates. It is almost inaccessible on three sides from a ravine, over which there are two bridges thrown for two of the entrances, the approach in the other parts being impeded by a dry ditch, which however is too small to cause any serious obstacle. At each of the gates, a custom-house officer and some soldiers are placed, one of whom is sent to the custom-house with all goods that enter.

There are no regular police; but, in 1839, it was found necessary on account of the frequent robberies and assassinations which occurred after dark, to establish a body of watchmen (vigilantes), who are armed with a cutlass, and have been found very efficient in lessening the commission of those crimes. Guatemala despatches three mails weekly,—to Isabel with the mail for Belize, Europe, &c.; to San Salvador, Honduras, &c., and to the Altos and Mexico. The arrival of these mails is respectively announced by the hoisting of a white, blue, and red flag.

Provisions, and indeed any article of ordinary consumption, are very moderate in Guatemala: meat costs about a medio (3*d.* sterling) per pound; poultry one to two reals (6*d.* to 1*s.*) each, and turkeys four reals each. Vegetables and fruit, though all brought to a distance of ten leagues from old Guatemala, are very moderate in price. Maize, or Indian corn, is worth about six reals to a dollar; the fanega, which weighs about 300 pounds, consisting of 400 heads of

corn; and, as this forms the general food of the lower classes, it will be seen that they can live for very little. Flour, made from wheat, is worth from three to four dollars the 100 pounds; and all common articles of British manufacture can be bought at about the same price as they are retailed for in country towns in England, while some trifling articles on which the English retail shopkeepers charge a large profit, can be bought considerably lower in Guatemala.

Two newspapers, the Government Gazette and the Aurora, are published weekly; they are printed upon small paper, and their circulation can do little more than pay expenses. There are from four to five printing offices, and three almanacks are published, very neatly got up, and containing much more useful information than those generally published in Europe. There is no bookseller's shop, though a few volumes of novels are exposed for sale by many of the dealers. Reading is rarely resorted to in Guatemala, the only amusements of the men being gambling and making love to the fair sex, and of the women, intriguing and scandal.

Rafael Carrera, the commander in chief and president of the state of Guatemala, is a dark-coloured and extremely ill looking mestizo. He was originally servant to a woman of no very respectable character in Amatitlan, and afterwards to a Spaniard, from whom it is supposed he learnt the little knowledge and breeding he possessed when he first appeared on the political stage of Guatemala; afterwards he was employed as a pig driver; that is, in purchasing and personally driving pigs from the villages to Guatemala

and the more populous towns. The cholera morbus having appeared in April 1837, the Indians were led to believe that the waters had been poisoned by emissaries sent by the parties then ruling the state; and being also excited against the system of trial by jury, (then lately brought into operation by parties inimical to liberal institutions,) they united, to the number of some thousands in the town of Santa Rosa, and under the command of Carrera, who had been one of the most active in deceiving them, destroyed a party of forty dragoons who had been sent out to disperse them. Carrera's faction was frequently defeated, and a vast slaughter made of the Indians who followed him at Villa Nueva, by the government troops under the command of General Salagar, on the 11th of September 1838; but they have always reunited in greater force, and on the 13th of April 1839, Carrera took Guatemala at the head of 5000 Indians; since which time he has retained all the real power in his hands. For some time he acted nominally under Mariano Rivera Paz, president of the state, but he has since dissolved the shadow of a representative assembly which existed; and, having on the 19th of March 1840, defeated General Marazan (the legal president of the republic) by means of an immense superiority of force, and driven him out of Guatemala, after he had occupied it for a day, he has since remained sole and supreme dictator of the state. It must be allowed, however, that though at the commencement of his power, he perpetrated some horrid acts of cruelty which any one must shudder to recount, and frequently put to death his real or supposed enemies with the

most dreadful tortures, without a shadow of proof or form of trial, he has since conducted himself with remarkable moderation, and has done much to improve the administration of the laws, destroy robbers, and consolidate the government. By extortions and confiscations, he has amassed some hundred thousand dollars in cash, lands, and houses; and it is consequently his interest to maintain a settled government and give protection to property; but in his private life, he is more indecently immoral than could be conceived or understood by most English readers.

I have only twice conversed with General Carrera; on the first occasion, when introduced by Mr. Skinner, he was sick in bed, and, as usual among the natives, had not sent for a doctor, but asked me to prescribe for him. He asked me, among other questions, how long I had been learning Spanish, and if I could read and write it; and when I replied, that I had learnt to read and write it perfectly with about three months' study, he said, that he supposed he would be able to learn English in the same time; which however appeared to me rather problematical, as he has only learned to read and write a very little since he was made general, and knows nothing of the grammar even of his own language, as was proved in rather a ridiculous manner, after he had been about two years in Guatemala. At a meeting of the members of the government, Don Jorge Viteri, then the minister, but now bishop of San Salvador, proposed some measures not agreeable to Carrera, who said in a positive tone that they should not be passed; upon which the minister replied, "Vos tiene la fuerza

fisica, pero nosotros tenemus la fuerza moral" (you have brute force on your side, but we have the moral force on ours). But as Moral is a name of several families in Guatemala, Carrera mistook the minister's meaning, and, supposing that he meant they had the force of the Morals to rely upon, he hurried off to the barracks and collected together the troops, exclaiming, Where are the Morals that are going to oppose me? and putting a guard on the room where the members of government were assembled, he kept them prisoners for several hours.

Carrera has none of the affected pride or officious politeness which attaches to most of the Spaniards and their half-bred descendants; his manners much more resemble the quiet dignity and easy freedom of an Indian chief, than those of any other mestizo I have seen. Although the war cry of his party was death to the strangers, he is now remarkably civil to all he meets, and asks and listens very attentively to their advice, frequently expressing his regret at his own ignorance and the general want of education in the country.

Though he was raised to power by the faction of self-called nobles, the priests and their party, he is pretty cool to both, and has of late chosen none of his ministers from among them. Some time ago he avowed his intention of laying down his authority and making a voyage to Europe; but he appears to have altered his mind, though it certainly would have been a prudent resolution, as he has wealth enough to live in any part of the world, and must be certain, that if he remain in Guatemala, he will share the fate of all who have governed in Central America, and be

either obliged to fly for his life with the loss of every thing, or taken and shot. His power has already endured longer than is usual in the country, but it now shows symptoms of being on the wane, for, by allying himself with the whites and mestizoes, he has in a great measure lost his influence among the Indians, who say that he has betrayed them. All the other classes have never ceased to hate and fear him, and watch an opportunity to overturn his power; and, though he takes great care always to keep a body of troops near his person, and has large supplies of arms and ammunition at hand, he will certainly find, that the very troops in whom he trusts will betray him, and that the arms and ammunition will one day be used for his destruction.

On the 25th of the month, we visited the old capital of Guatemala, which was partially ruined by an earthquake in the year 1773. I was hospitably received by Doctor Weems, the United States' Consul-General, to whom Mr. Skinner gave me a letter of introduction. He showed me the principal part of the town, and in the afternoon took me to visit a cochineal estate at Dueñas a distance of three leagues, belonging to Mr. Wild, an Englishman, where I remained all night. The estate is but of small extent, being not more than thirty mansanas, or about fifty-five British acres, and its quality is not very good, though Mr. Wild has made a little money during the six years he has been engaged in the business.

Old Guatemala is situated in a deep valley, having an opening towards the S. W. only, but closed by high mountains on the other sides; on each side an enor-

mous volcanic peak rears its giant head, that on the S.E. being denominated the Volcano of Water, (agua), and that on the N. W., the Volcano of Fire (fuego). At the foot of the Volcano of Water, two leagues S.W. of Old Guatemala, lies a small village with a church, and what was formerly a very large convent. Here, the original city of Guatemala was founded in 1525 by Gonzales, but three years after it was nearly destroyed by a torrent of water, which rushed down from the volcano with such violence as to level every thing it met in its passage, hurling before it immense rocks, trees, and mounds of earth. From this the volcano acquired its name, it being supposed that it vomited water instead of fire, but the fact appears to be that the old crater was full of water, which by its pressure overthrew one of the sides and rushed down as described. Very fabulous accounts have been given regarding the catastrophe in Europe; and a most able scientific work lately published, states that the site of the old city is now occupied by a lake, which is so far from the fact, that no lake exists nearer than that of Amatitlan, which is twenty miles distant. The site of the old city is rather high, and remarkably dry and free from all stagnant water. The Volcano of Water has often been ascended by natives and strangers, and on the measurement made by a German some years ago, it rises to 14,450 feet above the level of the sea. Its summit appears to be almost touching the region of perpetual snow, and the lake of water which fills the external crater is frozen in the months of December, January, and February, when the Indians of the neighbouring villages ascend it

to fetch ice, and hoar frost, which falls so heavily as to resemble snow, for the supply of the capital, Old Guatemala, and Amatitlan; while at the same period the average temperature at the foot of the mountain is 75° to 80° Fahrenheit, and on the coast in the same latitude upwards of 90°. There appears to be every reason to believe, that the volcano, which is only about five leagues distant from the other, called the Volcano of Fire, must have become dormant before the other commenced its eruption, as it appears impossible, from analogy, that two volcanic vents should exist so near each other, and as no increase in the height of the Volcano of Fire has been observed within the historical period.

The Volcano of Fire has never been ascended by any person, and the steepness of its cone, which is covered with ashes resembling fine sand, makes, it is said, such an ascent impossible. It always emits a wreath of smoke from the extreme top, where the crater would appear to exist: but there is no tradition of any eruption having taken place, nor could it do so without destroying Old Guatemala and a number of other towns situated at its base. Still the continued emission of smoke shows that its fires are still active, and that they may yet again break out with terrific violence, as the immense masses of vitrified rock, volcanic sand, and lava, scattered all over the neighbourhood for many leagues, show has been done in past ages. The immense height and inaccessible position of the crater, render examination impracticable, and even a slight eruption could hardly be perceived at the great distance below at which the nearest villages are situ-

ated. Old Guatemala, like most parts of Central America, was always very subject to violent earthquakes, which is an exception to the supposed rule of their not being violent in the immediate vicinity of volcanic vents. That of 1773 was undoubtedly very violent, though, like all similar catastrophes, much exaggerated in some accounts given of it; the same ridiculous fictions of the earth opening in immense fissures, and vomiting fire and smoke, swallowing entire houses, with their inhabitants, &c. &c., being related both of it, and of the earthquakes of Quito, Lima, and Conception. Though the churches, government buildings, and many of the private houses were a good deal shaken, and some few of them thrown down by the violence of the shock, the damage was not at all of an extent to render necessary the abandonment of the city. This was a job got up on speculation by the officers of government in order to make money by selling the land in la Hermita for the new capital. The present ruined and desolate appearance is caused more by the destruction that took place for the purpose of obtaining materials for new erections, and by seventy years' neglect, than by the effects of the earthquake.

Many of the churches and other buildings, however, still remain entire, and many others are not more injured than might be expected from so long an abandonment. The Spanish government tried in vain for many years, after the removal of the capital, to force all the inhabitants to leave Old Guatemala; but the superior fertility of its land offered such inducements to remain, that it was finally obliged to

permit the poorer classes to continue in the old capital.

The present appearance of the city, however, is nearly what might have been expected after the convulsion. Ruins of magnificent buildings exist in every street, few attempts having been made to repair the damaged edifices, or to pull them down and build others; and the huts of the poorest inhabitants are in some places strangely mixed up with the magnificent buildings, which have partly yielded materials for their construction. Two sides of the market-place contain the ruins of the cathedral and the palace; the first was a splendid Gothic edifice of hewn stone, and, though it was a good deal shaken by the earthquake, and a large part of the walls were removed for other buildings, enough still remains to show that it must have been one of the most beautiful and costly edifices in America. It measures about 200 yards in length, and 70 in breadth, and is built in the form of a double cross, the columns and arches being most richly and elaborately carved. The palace has been a magnificent building, consisting of two stories, built of hewn stone, and forming for the whole length, upwards of 200 yards, a magnificent piazza, supported by Corinthian pillars. The upper story is entirely in ruins; but the greater part of the lower is still used for shops and other purposes. Many of the churches, of which there were a hundred, and the monasteries, which exceeded twenty, must have been most magnificent; about twenty-five are still used by the priests, and many more are turned into dwelling-houses; while several have huts erected, and cactus planted inside

their walls. The population of Old Guatemala before the earthquake, is stated to have exceeded 60,000, being more than that of New and Old Guatemala jointly at present; the population of the former being estimated at 35,000, and the latter certainly not exceeding 20,000.

The city is well watered by two rivers, one of which is a large stream, and the other small, but of beautifully clear water: the latter is called the Rio Pensativo (river pensive), and was famed in Spanish poetry. Many of the fountains which ornamented the city still exist, and it is most abundantly supplied with pure water. The cultivation of cochineal was introduced twenty years ago from Oajaca, in Mexico, and with some interruptions, has gone on gradually increasing down to the present time; the largest production, that of 1841, being about 9000 bales; that of the present year (1846) has been about 6000. A return of the quantity imported is kept in the custom-house of Guatemala; but the produce of Old Guatemala, Amatitlan, and Villa Nueva, is not separated.

Most of the cochineal lands belong to the municipality, and are let by them on nine-year leases, which period is calculated as the ordinary duration of a cochineal plantation, as at the end of that time the cactus is exhausted and being very small and stunted in its growth is not worth seeding with the insect; so that it must either be replanted or cut down by the root, and left two or three years to grow up again. The land about Old Guatemala, would in many parts be well suited to the growth of coffee, which has been successfully tried to a small

extent: it also produces nearly all the vegetables and fruits which are consumed in the capital; these are mostly cultivated by the Indians who have small gardens, and who carry the produce, which they cannot sell in Old Guatemala, on their backs to the capital. It is curious that, after carrying a load, perhaps worth a dollar, to Guatemala, a distance of thirty miles, they are quite contented to sell it at the same price or a little lower, than they will do when it is purchased at their own doors; and for the carriage of the same weight to Guatemala, they would require a dollar and a half. The sugar cane thrives very well in the neighbourhood of Old Guatemala, but takes eighteen months to come to perfection, instead of six, the time required near the coast. There are four or five sugar estates, which however only manufacture the crude juice of the cane, boiled till it crystallises (and called chancaca), and common unrectified spirits or rather high wines. The climate of Old Guatemala is certainly one of the most healthy and agreeable in any part of the world. Frost is unknown, and the thermometer never exceeds 80° of Fahrenheit. The coldest months are December and January, and the hottest March and April. The rainy season generally sets in about the end of May and ceases in the beginning of October, though occasional showers occur two or three weeks before and after these periods. Gales of wind (which are very frequent in the capital, and extremely unpleasant in the dry season, when the country is parched and the roads covered with quantities of dust) never occur in Old Guatemala; and, were it not the single objection of the frequency of

earthquakes, which, however, is rather a nominal than a real inconvenience, the old capital of Guatemala would be a complete earthly paradise as far as nature could make it.

The present governor of this city is Sotero Carrera, brother of the president, whom he surpasses in every vice. In his drunken fits, which are very frequent, he thinks nothing of ordering some of the inhabitants to be assassinated, without any reason whatever; and even on one occasion he threatened and insulted Mr. Chatfield, the British Consul-General, who resided for some years in Old Guatemala; but, as he is the brother of the dictator, no one dares to call him to account for his numberless crimes.

Already this country, so new in the world's history, presents many traces of fallen grandeur, owing to its continued civil wars, and the instability of government preventing the building of new edifices, or the repair of old ones.

On the 1st of November I left Guatemala, in company with Don Francisco Geral and Don Juakin Saynes. We mounted at 5 A. M., but did not start till eight o'clock. Having had no breakfast I wished to stop at ten o'clock to get something to eat; but, as the others objected, I got in a pet and refused afterwards to stop at all till the end of the day's journey, believing that I could endure hunger longer than a Spaniard or any of their descendants: and in this I was not mistaken, as my two companions were ready to faint before night. At sunset we reached Cuajinequilapa, where, from the bad selection of Don Juakin Saynes, who as the most expe-

rienced traveller acted as guide, we were most miserably lodged. We started again before daylight, and, after a most tedious day's journey, arrived at the cattle estate of the Cocos two hours after sunset; where, I preferred sleeping in the forest to being pestered with Don Juakin's formalities and nonsense, though I awoke next morning, in consequence, with a bad cold and a considerable touch of fever.

The mules were not to be found in the morning, so that we did not start till 8 A. M., and after passing the Rio Paz, we lost our road and wandered for six hours through a lonely forest without meeting a human being. At last we met a solitary Indian who directed us how to gain the road. After a most fatiguing day's journey we arrived at the town (villa) of Chinchilapa about 8½ P. M.; but when about to enter the principal square (plaza), we were suddenly stopped by two men armed with muskets who commenced abusing us in the most violent language, and one of them, at length, pointed his musket at the foremost of the party. I pushed forward and put a pistol to his head, and in a moment would have sent him to the other world had he not suddenly dropped his musket, exclaiming, "there is the *priest*, you robbers." This gentleman, who had arrived so opportunely, very politely requested to know who we were, and, finding that we certainly were not robbers, informed us that the people who had attacked us were no more so than ourselves, but worthy citizens who had turned out to defend their town from a noted band of robbers who had entered and plundered some houses the preceding day. I took care to tell

him, that I suspected they were well aware that we were not really robbers or they would not have been so valiant, and that I had very nearly sent one of the faithful guardians to account to another tribunal; which the priest admitted I should have been quite justified in doing. After a short parley, the guardians became our guides to the house of a friend of Don Juakin Saynes, where we passed the night, all being in terror of another visit from the robbers who had plundered and beaten, and it was supposed, murdered, a number of people on the Santa Ana road; they told us we must not think of proceeding on our journey, and succeeded in frightening Don Juakin so completely, that he and Don Francisco Geral determined on returning back and proceeding by Sonsonate. I told them to go where they liked, but that I would proceed on my journey; and Don Francisco, who had been a military officer, annoyed by my jeers, said he would go with me, so that Don Juakin was shamed into following his example, though evidently sorely against his will. Starting at day-light, we arrived safely at Santa Ana at 10 A. M. without meeting anything like a robber, though Don Francisco and I kept our pistols cocked in our hands nearly all the road. Santa Ana, which as usual is denominated a city though it only contains 4000 or 5000 inhabitants, has a sad and half ruined appearance; and though none of its buildings are in any way remarkable, numbers of tottering walls, covered with trees and arches half fallen give it the venerable appearance common to the towns of Central America. Santa Ana has been the scene of fierce conflicts between the troops of San Salvador and

Guatemala. On the 17th of December 1827, a most bloody battle was fought between them, when the streets were filled with dead and coloured with streams of blood: in this and other actions during the civil wars the town has suffered much. Santa Ana and its neighbourhood supply the greater part of this state, and also the city of Guatemala, with sugar, which is of very fine quality, forming the hardest and whitest lump I have ever seen in sugar which had not been refined. The article is manufactured in small farms, each containing patches with a few acres of sugar-cane, which is ground in small wooden mills driven by oxen, called by the natives trapiches; and the creaking of the wooden rollers may be heard a mile off in travelling along the road. The cane is all of the description indigenous to America, which, though here not so large nor so quick in its growth as on the coast, is said to produce twice as much sugar and of a much better quality, the loss from the molasses being very trifling in comparison. The climate of Santa Ana is excellent, being two or three degrees hotter than that of the city of San Salvador.

Again proceeding on our journey, and passing through the village of Cuatapeke, at sunset we reached a small collection of huts, called the asienda of Cajoco, six leagues from Santa Ana. We started again at dawn, and passing through San Andres, at 10 A. M. reached Saltapeke, a large village rather prettily situated, about twelve leagues distant from Santa Ana, and eight from San Salvador. After breakfast we again proceeded on our journey, the road being covered with im-

mense masses of scoriæ (called by the natives mal pais), and huge blocks of vitrified rock ejected from a low mountain in the neighbourhood, which would appear to be an extinct volcano as no tradition exists of its eruptions, which have however at some former period covered the country to the depth of several hundred feet. Passing the village of Ajapa, two leagues further on our road, we reached San Salvador at sunset, being stopped at the gate and asked a great many questions, for the government was at the time in a very tottering condition, and in hourly fear of a revolution; however, on showing our passports which were from Guatemala, where nothing was then feared, we were permitted to proceed. The keeper of the public-house being from home we were forced to seek fresh quarters, which I found very readily; but seeing the rest of the party wandering about the streets, I invited them to come in till their servants could find accommodation. To my surprise they began to hang up their hammocks, and prepare to sleep in my room, which appeared to be far too free and easy, whereupon I saddled my beasts and left in search of other lodgings, which I very soon found. I have always perceived, that when alone I am much better received by the natives, than when travelling in company with their countrymen.

Completely disgusted with travelling in company, I was glad to find my companions intended to remain some days, and I prepared to proceed next day alone; but being detained till three o'clock P. M., I only reached San Martin an hour after dark, where I slept. I breakfasted at Cojutepeke, and was again received with the greatest delight

by the Indian, at whose house I staid during the wet day on my former journey. I reached Atapetitan at 6 P. M., and San Vicente about an hour after sunset, where I slept at the house of Don Joze Ponce. Having hired another mule, (the one taken from the Union being sore-backed, caused by the badness of the country saddle hired with it,) I did not reach the river Lempa till 2 P. M.; whence we ascended a wild desolate hill covered with stunted trees but entirely without water. The new mule would not go beyond a walk, do what I would, and, although the spurs were stuck into its side till the blood ran down in a stream, all was in vain; the brute was proof against all my efforts, being, I suppose, a common cargo mule and never accustomed to any thing but a walk. This day's journey was consequently most tedious; but at last, about 9 P. M., we reached a small hut, and finding we were close to the cattle estate of Hamanas, we proceeded thither; and the owner, who was pretty civil, gave me an empty room to sleep in. This estate is of great extent, but, from its retired situation, of but little value. It consists of a table land, I should think at least 1500 or 2000 feet above the level of the sea, and the atmosphere is cool and pleasant; a small stream of water, the only one to be met with for many leagues, passes close by the house, which, like most of those on cattle estates, is a large rude building with a yard in front for collecting the cattle. There is abundance of land in the neighbourhood capable of cultivation, but nothing is grown beyond a little maize for the use of the servants of the estate. Proceeding again on our journey before daylight, we reached Chinemeka at 10 A. M. The whole of the

road is a succession of steep ascents and descents, and the country is as wild and desolate as can be conceived, though there is abundance of good land capable of cultivation were there inhabitants to occupy it. Chinemeka is prettily situated in a very rich alluvial valley, part of which is cultivated, and only an industrious population is wanted to make it a complete garden.

The people here seem to be miserably poor, and though the population may amount to from 3000 to 4000, principally Mestizoes, the woman at whose house I stopped to breakfast, told me that there was no person in the town who had got a capital of a hundred dollars. Here, as in most parts of Central America, there appears to be no wish for improvement; the people just plant enough of maize to exist on, and a few dollars serve to procure calico sufficient to clothe them. A great proportion of the population have the enlargement of the glands of the neck, called goître, some of them to a hideous extent; and, though it is a common complaint in all the mountainous parts of Central America, and not generally thought a deformity, I have never seen it so general among all ages and sexes as in Chinemeka. Leaving Chinemeka, we passed over a ridge of hills, having a long and steep ascent and descent; at long intervals there are some patches of cultivation, and in two places patches of cane, near which I heard the creaking of the wooden mills grinding it. At 3 P. M. we reached the village of Guaymoka, close to which there is a beautiful natural fountain of crystal water gushing from the foot of a basaltic rock, and discharging some hundred gallons every minute.

Here we rested a little, and watered the beasts; after which, proceeding on our journey, we reached San Miguel at 5 P. M.

I found Don Angel Moglea, at whose house I stopped, about to proceed to the Union early in the morning, and although pretty well tired, and still ill of the fever I caught by sleeping in the forest at the Cocos, I prepared to follow him, only waiting till I could purchase some food for the beasts to eat next morning; as in all Central American towns it is impossible to procure food for horses after 4 P. M., the grass and other herbage for them being always brought into town in the early part of the day and sold, no person buying more than they want for the present use of their own horses and mules. Leaving San Miguel at 7 A. M., we rested an hour's time under the shade of some trees along side the river at San Antonio, and reached the Union at 4 P. M. The port was in a very busy state, five vessels having arrived with merchandise for the November fair, which, however, it was clear would again turn out a disappointment, on account of the war with the state of Nicaragua, merchants being afraid to go to San Miguel, lest the government should levy contributions from them, and the farmers and labouring classes not daring to come and make their usual purchases, lest they might be taken for soldiers. I was subsequently informed that no dealers of the country, except women, actually made their appearance, and that the whole of the sales effected were a mere trifle, not exceeding fifty or sixty thousand dollars, so that the vessels took most of their cargoes to Costa Rica, and Iztapa, the port of Guatemala. All this time the vil-

lage of the Union was in a continued state of bustle from the arrival and departure of troops for Nicaragua; couriers were also daily arriving with accounts of the proceedings before Leon, which was closely besieged by the forces of Honduras and San Salvador, commanded by the presidents of these states. The inhabitants were in some fear of a visit from the enemy, who had a small vessel ready to convey troops; and much more justly, of the robbery and oppression of their own government. Valuable goods were brought me daily to take care of, and merchandise in the government warehouse was made out in my name, though I did not much like the responsibility, for which I knew I should hardly get thanked by the miserable natives; and I took care to tell them not to suppose that I would say the goods were really mine if taken possession of by the government, or claimed for them through H. B. M. consul.

On the 23d of December I again embarked, in company with Mr. Bridge, on board his vessel, the Albert Henry, in which he was a second time so kind as to give me a free passage. We reached Realejo the following day, and found anchored in the port two coasting vessels, one belonging to Mr. Moglea, and the other to Mr. Ye Picarte, a Frenchman resident in Costa Rica, both of which had been taken forcible possession of by Malespein for his operations against Nicaragua; and also the Caroline, a schooner chartered by the Nicaraguan government, of which the people of the Union had so long been in fear, but which had just been captured by General Sachet, with a body of troops sent for that purpose by one of the stolen vessels, the Argentina. The

town of Realejo was in possession of Malespein's troops, and all the male inhabitants had left to hide themselves in the woods, though it is said they had no occasion to do so as the San Salvador troops had behaved in a very orderly manner, and plundered no one nor committed any excess. Most of the women remained quietly in their houses, and were making a little money by selling provisions and whatever else they had disposable, to the San Salvador soldiers.

Having passed as melancholy a Christmas as I ever did, in this miserable little village, we again went on board on the afternoon of the following day, and got out of the harbour the same night. Making a remarkably fine passage, we reached Acajantala, the port of Sonsonate, on the 28th at 2 P. M.; and, proceeding on shore, the deputy of the harbour master refused to let us return on board, assigning as his reason, the unsettled state of the government and his fear that we might be friends of the discontented, who had come to take advantage of the defenceless state of the port. Mr. Bridge tried to frighten him into compliance without effect; but finally, the serjeant of the guard came forward, and assured the timid officer that we were English, that it was all right, and some of the boatmen who knew me assured him that he need not be afraid, so that we were at last permitted to re-embark.

Acajantala was a place of some importance during the Spanish government, as all the merchandize intended for Guatemala was there disembarked, and the custom house, built by the former rulers, still exists and is superior to any yet erected in Central America. The port cannot be denominated good,

being little more than a roadstead, partially sheltered by a neck of land, protecting it from the westerly swell but leaving it completely open to the southward; the beach is long and shelving; a continued surf breaks upon it, and a good deal of care is required to prevent an ordinary boat being swamped. Still the port is naturally superior to that of Valparaiso, and many others on the American coast which are a good deal frequented; and, were a jetty carried to the outside of the surf, which could readily be done at a very moderate expense, there would be no difficulty in at all times landing cargoes, without the possibility of their being damaged. After breakfast, on the morning of the 29th, we again landed, but could not procure horses for Sonsonate till next morning; so that we took up our quarters at Don Victor Lenouvel's house, where there was at present no person but an old woman residing, it being made use of only when he has any goods to receive in the port. Next morning we proceeded to Sonsonate, which is only five leagues distant, the road being almost perfectly level, and sufficiently good to admit the passage to and fro of the native carts, which, like those in all parts of Spanish America, are merely small boxes with wooden wheels made from a large tree sawed transversely.

I was detained in Sonsonate on business till the 6th of January, when I started for Guatemala, with a cavalcade of mules, including one laden with money. This being specially recommended to my care, I tied it to my servant's horse, keeping close behind so as to cover it with my pistols. We were rather late in getting the mules ready, and did not

leave Sonsonate till 8 A. M. We reached Apeneca at noon; and after resting there an hour, proceeded on our journey towards the river Paz, when we were benighted, having missed a cattle estate where I had intended to sleep. About 8 P. M., I was alarmed by hearing my servant call out, and, immediately, his own mule and the one laden with money, tied behind, fell down, and a North American of the party going forward to see what was the matter, fell headlong also; luckily, no one was hurt, and I immediately dismounted, and saw that we had come to a steep precipice which it would be quite impossible to descend in the dark. After in vain trying to find a better road, we had no resource left but to sleep in the forest, which we entered, and, unloading the mules made a large fire. We were not destitute of provisions, but had no water, which made the rest of the party complain sadly, though I did not feel the inconvenience, not being accustomed to drink much.

At dawn I examined our position, and found that we had not, as I supposed, got out of the mule track in the dark, but had come to the top of the valley through which the river Paz flows, the descent into which is difficult enough in the day-time, but quite impracticable in a dark night. We reached the cattle estate of the Cocos to breakfast; but being much detained by the mule carrying the money, we were again overtaken by darkness long before we could reach the hut where I intended to stop. In crossing a river we lost our road, but I was lucky enough, after some delay, to find it again by examining the ground carefully on foot, and at 8 P. M. we reached a small hut at the bottom of the

hill of La Leona, though I did not feel very comfortable at having to remain here, as all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood have an extremely bad character. However, I managed to prevent their seeing what the boxes contained, and, for greater security, put them below my head at night in the open shed where I slept. Starting again on our journey at daylight, we breakfasted at the Oratorio, and arrived at the Corral de Piedra at 4 P. M., where we remained for the night, reaching Guatemala the next day. I had, luckily, not to go to the meson, as Mr. Skinner kindly gave me a bed in his sitting-room till I could get lodgings.

On the 2d of February, 1845, I witnessed what is called a revolution in Guatemala, though, as the rising produced no change in the government, it should be more properly called an insurrection.

Carrera having gone to his estate in the Altos, three long days' journey distant, a conspiracy was got up by a part of the self-called nobles of Guatemala, and other parties whose names may probably never transpire, to change the government. The greater part of the soldiers, in number about 300, were tampered with, and, at a signal early in the morning, rushed to arms, deposed their officers, and breaking open the gaol, let out all the prisoners. Among these was Colonel Monte Rosas, who was imprisoned on account of an attempted revolution the preceding year, and who was now put at the head of the insurgents.

Being awoke in the morning by a continued firing, I imagined it was merely the celebration of the carnival, of which this was the first day, till

a young man, a friend of the owner of the house where I was lodging, entered in the greatest terror, exclaiming, "There is a revolution." The firing soon ceased, the small part of the troops, who adhered to Carrera's interest, being killed and driven out of the city, and the insurgents having taken possession of the barracks and all the arms and ammunition, remained in undisputed possession for four days. During this time accounts arrived that Carrera's brother and some of his officers were collecting troops to attack the city; but, as all the arms of the state were in possession of the insurgents, they were a good deal puzzled what to do, and Carrera's brother, after approaching the city, retreated in confusion before a body of the insurgents, who sallied out to attack him. This victory was celebrated in Guatemala by ringing all the church bells, firing guns, letting off crackers, &c.; but it soon appeared that the triumph was premature, for none of the respectable citizens joined Rosas, considering him, it was said, to be as bad as, or worse than, Carrera.

It appeared most surprising that such a set of desperadoes, as a large part of Monte Rosas's troops were, should have conducted themselves so moderately as they did. They neither plundered nor committed any violence after the first outbreak was over, though, as usual, all the horses were taken for the officers. I saved those in the house where I was staying, for, when the officer came with a troop to take them, I appeared to answer his summons, and told him he had better leave alone the property of British subjects; upon which he went away without touching them. As no attempts were made to barricade the

streets, or take other means to defend the city, it was clear that Monte Rosas despaired of success when he saw that no respectable persons joined him; and on the 6th, he entered into a convention with the civic authorities, by which he was to receive 5000 dollars to divide among his troops, who were to march out of the city and deliver up their arms, not being further molested. This convention was, however, entirely disregarded by Carrera's party. His brother pursued and attacked the insurgents, who were dispersed and offered little resistance, killing a great many; but Monte Rosas, and most of the officers, managed to escape to Mexico.

Rafael Carrera, on the first account of the insurrection, had become quite desperate, and was thrown into a high fever; during which he proposed to resign his authority and leave the state, but hearing of the suppression of the revolt, he returned to Guatemala on the 10th, making a pompous entry, with 2000 unarmed troops, or rather vagabonds whom his leaders had collected in the villages in hopes that they would be allowed to plunder Guatemala. Finding that nearly all the self-called nobles and most of the party who had raised him to power, had favoured the revolt, he prudently contented himself with minor victims. About ten were shot without any form of trial, one or two of whom were afterwards found actually to have been unfavourable to the revolt; and the city was forced to collect 20,000 dollars as a gift to the vagabonds who had entered with Carrera.

CHAP. IV.

DEPARTURE FROM GUATEMALA — ENCOUNTER WITH ROBBERS. — ARRIVAL AT SAN MIGUEL, AND RETURN TO GUATEMALA.— DESCRIPTION OF AMATITLAN. — EXTRAORDINARY PROXIMITY OF VOLCANIC FIRES. — A LAKE AND RIVER HEATED BY THEM. — CULTIVATION OF COCHINEAL ESTATES, AND PROCESS OF RAISING THE INSECT IN AMATITLAN AND OLD GUATEMALA. — TOWNS NEAR AMATITLAN. — ASCENT OF THE VOLCANO OF TORMENTOS. — JOURNEY TO SAN MIGUEL, AND RETURN TO AMATITLAN. — A GUATEMALA NOBLE. — FEAST OF AMATITLAN.

On the 23d of April, 1845, we left Guatemala for Sonsonate and San Miguel. My servant who had been with me for nearly twelve months, had consented to accompany me, but having found another place the day before, he left me at a moment's notice and I was obliged to engage a stranger, a native of San Salvador, the only servant I could find at the moment. At 5 A. M. we passed Cuajinequilapa, where I was detained half an hour by a smart shower of rain. At 6 P. M. we reached the miserable little village, called the Esclavo, sixteen leagues on our journey. The cabildo, which is the building legally appropriated to the accommodation of travellers, &c., being occupied by a priest, I had much difficulty in finding any place to pass the night, but at last was permitted to remain at a small hut, as usual full of men, women, pigs, dogs, fowls, &c. Shortly afterwards, three very ill-looking men came up and obtained permission to remain at the hut, and soon become very familiar with my servant, who chattered to them like a parrot,

though I several times ordered him to be silent, but to no purpose. After procuring something to eat, we lay down to rest in a small shed full of maize. About midnight one of the men came up to where I was lying, and when he had approached within about two yards, I raised one of my pistols, which lay beside me, and pointing it at him, asked him what he wanted, when he immediately withdrew without replying. Being unable to sleep, I got up, and awaking my servant ordered him to saddle the beasts, but he was so very slow in doing it, that though the three men did not awake for half an hour afterwards, they saddled their horses and started before us.

I had not liked their appearance from the first, and the occurrence of the preceding night and the manner in which they had left, made me somewhat suspicious that they intended no good; and as I had heard my servant tell them where I was bound for, and all about me, I felt pretty certain of again seeing them. Having carefully examined my pistols, I sent my servant on fifty yards before, telling him to call out if he saw any of his friends of the preceding evening. I had so little confidence in him from what I had seen, that I preferred being without his company in any encounter which might happen. I had proceeded about a league and a half on my journey and was going at a slow pace along the narrow mule-track, with a dense forest on each side, when I discovered by the light of a dusky morning, it being then about sun rise, the figures of three men mounted on horse-back standing still in the path, though my servant had given no alarm. I immediately took my two pistols, one of which was double barrelled, out of the holsters, and putting them on full cock stuck them

in my belt and proceeded forwards. When about ten yards from the men, one of them called out, "por onde vas," (where are you going to). I replied, "que le importa," (what does that matter to you), proceeding cautiously forward; when about three yards distant, another of the men said, "quiero ver su pasoporte" (I wish to see your passport). Having taken an aim at him with my pistol, in such a manner however that he did not see it, I replied, "luega voy enseuarle," (I will show you it directly). The same man immediately added "apeate," (dismount and get down on to your feet), and as he put his hand upon a large knife in his belt, I instantly fired the two barrels of my double barrelled pistol, one at him and the other at one of his companions; the first only appeared to take effect, the speaker tumbling off his horse upon the ground. I could not well have missed as he was only about three yards distant. My horse not being accustomed to fighting or not liking the use of strange weapons, gave two or three violent plunges, and took me forward about twenty yards before I could rein him up; as soon as I had done so, I took the pistol which was still loaded, in my hand, and returned to finish the combat, but though not five minutes had elapsed, the men and their horses had disappeared in the thick forest which surrounded us, and knowing that it would be useless to seek them further, I put my horse into a quick pace to come up with my servant, who commenced to chatter and inquire at what I had fired, &c.; but I soon silenced him by putting a pistol to his head, saying, "the first word that you speak again on the road, you shall have the contents of this." At 8 A. M. we reached the town of the Oratorio, and at sunset the

cattle estate of the Cocos which is thirty-five leagues from Guatemala. I cannot take any merit for courage in the preceding encounter; the men were not evidently real or professed robbers, but some idle rascals who probably had planned the attack from the information of my servant, and yet were frightened the moment an effectual resistance was made.

Leaving the Cocos at dawn on the 26th, I reached Sonsonate the evening of the same day, though I was led a circuit of three leagues by my servant, who pretended to know the road. Having hired fresh mules at Sonsonate, I again set off on my journey on the 28th, reaching San Salvador before sunset the next day, and Atapetilan on the following. One of my mules got completely lamed, but as I was a stranger, no one would lend me another, although I offered to deposit its value in the hands of the alcalde (the civic judge). Next morning, getting along as well as I could with a lame beast, we reached a cattle estate about three leagues beyond San Vicente, where the lady owner at once agreed to lend me a horse, her only fear being that the government officers might lay hands on the mule which I proposed leaving till my return; but I got over this difficulty by giving her a document to the effect that it belonged to me, a British subject, and requesting that no one should touch it at his peril. We reached the cattle estate of Hamanas at 6 P. M., but being refused lodging, were obliged to sleep under an open shed, outside a small hut in the neighbourhood, which proved but poor shelter from the rain that fell in torrents during the night. The following day, the 1st of May, 1845, we reached San Miguel at 5 P. M.

The fair at San Miguel was again a disappointment, owing to the war with Honduras; and, although the government endeavoured to assure the people, as far as they could, they were so used to have their property taken by forced loans from government, and themselves seized for soldiers, that they did not venture to appear openly. The only dealers who opened shops were a few foreigners, who were less timid and had better security for the non-interference of government; and the only purchasers were women, who are not afraid to appear, as they cannot be taken for soldiers. Being consequently unable to transact any business, and having, moreover, got a severe attack of San Miguel fever, I set off on the 12th, on my return to Guatemala, but so ill that I could not mount on horseback without assistance; a powerful dose of calomel, however, joined to removal from the burning and suffocating temperature of San Miguel, worked so speedy a cure that I reached San Salvador nearly well.

I remained one day at San Salvador, and was introduced to the new acting president, Guzman, a native of Costa Rica, and like most of his countrymen, more remarkable for cunning than honour or courage. His manners are gentlemanly; he has no mixture of coloured blood, and is rather good-looking, though he appears to possess but little talent or education.

I left San Salvador on the 16th, and reached Sonsonate the evening of the same day. Leaving Nahuisalco at dawn, we reached Cocos at sunset, completely soaked again by a heavy thunder shower. The next day also was cloudy, with showers, oc-

casionally so violent that we could not get beyond the Oratorio at night. The following day was equally bad, and the road a complete quagmire, but we managed to get to the Trijanes, a small village six leagues distant from Guatemala where there was a neat little cabildo. The alcalde, an old venerable looking Indian, received me most politely, and proceeded to bring me a load of hay for the horses on his own back. Having purchased two reals worth of maize, I was astonished at receiving more than three times as much as the beasts could eat; but I found, on inquiring, that maize has no fixed value there, as all that is disposed of is sold in Guatemala, where a fanega, or mule-load, about 350 lbs. weight, is now worth only six reals (three shillings British). By way of cross-examining the old man, I afterwards asked him what the hire of a mule or horse to Guatemala was worth; he told me, that the lowest price was twelve reals (six shillings), from which, it will be perceived, necessarily results the amusing conclusion that maize at the Trijanes is worth six reals less than nothing. Such contradictions as these are far from rare in Central America.

After a most unpleasant journey, and being every day wet to the skin since leaving Sonsonate, we reached Guatemala on the 21st of May, and Mr. Skinner was again so kind as to entertain me till I could find lodgings.

On the 23d of August I proceeded to Amatitlan, where I remained till the 24th of April, the greater part of the time engaged in the management of a cochineal estate. As I am the first British subject who has ever been resident in Amatitlan, and this

district of Central America, though one of the most interesting, is entirely unknown to foreigners, I shall here give a brief description of it as well as of the cultivation of cochineal, which, as far as I am aware, has never yet been correctly described in the English language.

Amatitlan is six leagues distant from the capital, lying N. N. W. in the direct road to Iztapa, the port of Guatemala, on the Pacific, from which it is twenty-three leagues distant; the road, as in all parts of Central America, being merely a track cleared in the woods by cutting down the trees and bushes, but without any attempt being made at levelling or draining, or even removing the stones and other natural impediments. The descent from Guatemala to the top of the valley of Amatitlan is gradual, but continued; but before entering the valley it is necessary to descend a steep hill, as it is on all sides surrounded by rugged and precipitous mountains, with the exception of a narrow outlet into which a river escapes. Nearly half of the entire valley, and what is most remarkable, the highest part, is occupied by a lake three leagues and a half long, with an average breadth of about half a league. The basin of the lake cannot, in many parts, be sounded; and I make little doubt that the whole valley of Amatitlan, together with the lake, has at some period been the site of an immense volcano, which has been blown to pieces by an extraordinary convulsion. All the strata forming the sides of the surrounding mountains seem cut off perpendicularly, and have exactly the appearance of the sides of the craters in many volcanoes I have examined in America. Immense quantities of pumice

stone may generally be found floating in some parts of the lake, and lying on its shores; in one place it forms a considerable piece of land, which shakes and quivers upon any person stepping upon it, being, in fact, a floating promontory formed by an immense collection of this formation, which is much lighter than water, as is readily proved by throwing into the water any of the stones lying upon the banks, which so far from sinking, float like a cork.

Two streams of water enter the lake, and a considerable river, certainly much larger than both united, runs out of it; the temperature of the latter being many degrees hotter than the former.

Around the lake in all parts, and the borders of the river, springs of boiling water gush out, many of them emitting large volumes of steam; and in the lake I make no doubt there must be many more, for though the river is equal to one of the second rate English streams, its temperature, and that of the lake, is many degrees above that of the atmosphere at all times; so that to the bather it has the effect of a tepid bath, and early in the morning, when the air is coolest, it feels quite hot. The temperature of the lake was, I found, 93° Fahrenheit, while at the same time the average temperature of the air for twenty-four hours was 79°, so that the temperature of this immense body of water was raised 14° by volcanic heat.

On some of the mountains on the north side of the lake, I discovered several crevices which emitted large volumes of steam of so high a temperature that in a moment it burnt my hand, though, singular to relate, there were a number of mosses and some water

plants growing in the openings, which did not seem to suffer from a heat equal to boiling water.

The town, or as it is to be called by order of the state government, the city, of Amatitlan is situated about a quarter of a league lower down the valley than the lake, below which the different parts may lie from fifty to a hundred feet.

It is said to contain 20,000 inhabitants by the residents, but from a rough guess I should not be inclined to estimate them at much more than half that number. The houses are built in a straggling manner, none having more than the ground story, and they are principally constructed of mud, beaten hard with a wooden mallet after being put into a wooden box of the dimensions of the walls, which is moved from place to place till the desired height and dimensions are attained. Each house has a large yard and a plantation of cactus attached to it, the leaves of which are cut and ranged in long narrow sheds to preserve the insect in the winter season.

The soil is all composed of volcanic matter, in many parts mixed with entire cinders, large blocks of lava, pumice, and toad stones.

The wells in the town are all of brackish water, having a mixture of alum and salt; but those in most parts of the suburbs and neighbourhood are all of hot water, free from any considerable mixture of minerals. In one which I got opened in the Rincon, the site of most of the larger cochineal plantations, the heat became intense after ten yards had been excavated; at twenty the ground thrown out was so hot as almost to burn my hands. Two men who

had engaged to open the well, abandoned it; at last I found a third, of a salamander nature, who, for a high reward engaged to follow it till he found water, which he did at thirty-two yards' depth, but actually boiling.

The heat in this well was so intense, that I wonder how any human being could endure it. On one occasion, I descended about half-way, but found I should have fainted had I gone any lower; the ground where this well was opened was situated rather high, but in the low grounds, near the lake and river, boiling water is met with everywhere at a depth of two or three yards, and in many places rises spontaneously to the surface; early in the morning before sunrise, if the hand be placed upon the ground it feels quite hot, and the steam may be seen ascending through the pores of the earth in all parts.

The hot water is always perfectly clear and free from all minerals, apparently rising from a great depth, while the springs of cold water appear to be formed in the upper strata, and are all impregnated with alum and salt; there is, however, only a small space, forming a part of the town, where cold water can be met with, the wells in all other parts being hot in different degrees, and those in the lowest situation always boiling. It would appear, that the volcanic fires are still active at a certain depth along the whole extent of the valley, as hot water is in all places met with on reaching a yard or two below the bed of the river and lake, and in most parts much sooner, appearing as if the water were forced up by the steam from below. The natural springs

are very irregular, sometimes discharging immense volumes of water, and a few hours afterwards being nearly dry, but they have no regular period, as the intermittent springs in some parts of the world. Many of the wells and natural springs emit large volumes of gas, while in others the water boils as if it were in a large pot. In all parts, except where vegetation is checked by the presence of alum, which is destructive to the growth of most plants, the cactus, on which the cochineal insect feeds, the sugar-cane, and most other vegetables thrive most luxuriantly, the high temperature at which the soil is always kept, and the gases emitted, having evidently a most powerful effect in promoting vegetation.

Amatitlan can boast of tolerable antiquity for an American town, having been one of the principal seats of the Jesuits, where they had large sugar estates and a number of slaves; the descent from whom is still to be traced in the colour and features of most of the natives, who, instead of being mestizoes, a mixture of the Spaniard and Indian, are nearly all mulattoes and zamboes, a mixture of the negro with the Spaniard and Indian. This mixture seems to form a class much superior to the mestizo, they are more active and industrious, and in a great measure without the apathy which attaches to the mestizoes and white Creoles in all parts of America. All the principal owners of cochineal plantations are of negro descent, and the best workmen always belong to the same class. They are remarkable for their enterprise, and also for their integrity, compared with the other classes, although they are extremely

ignorant, few of the cochineal growers being able either to read or write. Their principal vice is drunkenness. On Sundays, and the feast days of the Roman Catholic Church, it is rare to meet a sober person in the streets, and not one of these days passes without several people being killed in drunken frays. The habit of carrying knives is universal in all parts of Central America; and, of course, when the parties are intoxicated, the least real or supposed provocation leads to their employment.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, which took place at one time in all the Spanish dominions, Amatitlan was for many years a place of no importance, and as poor as most of the miserable villages in Central America; the only cultivation, except for the food of the place, being water melons to sell in Guatemala. But the cochineal insect having been introduced about twelve years ago, has succeeded beyond expectation, and Amatitlan has for several years been by far the most successful place for its cultivation.

The cochineal insect is generally supposed to be indigenous to the country near Oajaca in Mexico, though some persons in Guatemala have attempted to prove that it is a native of that state. It feeds upon some few species of cactus. The varieties which have been tried in Central America are five, the "penka beaver" (hedge cactus), which grows to a large size, the young insect readily attaching itself to the leaves, but the greater part is found to fall off before it is ready for gathering, and it was therefore only tried at the first introduction of the culture, but speedily abandoned; the "penka amarilla" (yellow-

flowering cactus), this species has a very large round shaped leaf, sometimes as much as eighteen inches in diameter; the cochineal thrives well upon it, but is found to yield very small crops, and the plant becomes exhausted after the insect has been allowed to feed upon it for three or four years; the "penka blanca" (white-flowering cactus), has a leaf generally about a foot long, four or five inches broad, and two inches thick of a dark green colour; this species is much superior to the former sorts, and grows quicker than any other, but it is found to become exhausted in five or six years, and the leaf growing exactly upright, the slightest shower of rain washes off the insect.

The fourth kind is called "mosote." It has a bright crimson flower, the leaf being of the same shape, but rather smaller than the white flowered, and of a lighter green than the panka blanca; the growth of this variety is the slowest of all, but it is found to give food to a much larger proportion of the insects, and to last many years longer than the other varieties. It is now universally preferred in Amatitlan, and in the best land a plantation is found to last twelve years, yielding two crops a year. The "costanea" has a bright red flower, and a leaf of a round shape, much smaller than any of the preceding varieties; but it grows fast, and has more leaves than the other sorts, and when only one crop is taken in the year, is found to produce much more cochineal than any of the other descriptions of the plant. It does not, however, last above seven years, and will not stand more than one crop annually.

This variety was brought from Oajaca, about eight years ago, and is now preferred in Old Guatemala.

The general size of the cochineal plantations in Amatitlan valley varies from one to ten mansanas, a space which contains 100 Spanish, or 88$\frac{8}{9}$ English yards square. Three or four estates of a much larger size have lately been planted, and one belonging to Señ Francisco Lopez contains 150 mansanas; but these estates are not nearly so productive as those of a smaller size, as the immense number of people who must be employed to work them causes a confusion and great loss of labour. The insect is preserved during the winter upon leaves cut off the cactus, and ranged in long narrow buildings, called almacenes, erected for the purpose. The roof of these buildings is from a yard to a yard and a half wide, and for the first six weeks the front, which is open, is covered with a screen made of cotton cloth, to protect the young insect from a sort of fly which lays an egg among them, which in a few days turns into a caterpillar and does a great deal of mischief, devouring a large quantity of the young animals; after that period they are left open to the sun and air. It is so arranged that the insects begin to breed in the beginning of October, about which time the rains cease in Amatitlan, though somewhat later in the vicinity, and most other parts of the state.

The insect is carefully removed from the leaves as soon as it begins to deposit its young, and put into small square pieces of muslin, calico, or the bark of a description of palm-tree, the latter being cheaper, and much preferable for the month of October, as it does not fall together when damp like a cotton

fabric; the four corners are pinned together with the thorn of a bush (a species of mimosa), which is very abundant in the neighbourhood; after about a hundred of the insects have been put in, one of these packets, called by the natives cartuch, is attached to each leaf or two, or one to each side between two leaves, which latter method is generally preferred. If the weather is fine and warm, the insect breeds so quickly, that in a few hours each leaf contains a sufficient quantity of the small insect, when the bag must be removed and attached to another leaf; for if it is left too long, the leaf becomes too thickly covered with young insects, which, from being too numerous, cannot obtain nourishment; and never attaining the proper size, produce, when dried, a small grained and very inferior cochineal, called "grancella," which is not worth more than half the price of the proper quality. As the cactus is always planted in rows of a certain length, it is usual to cover at one time the leaves of one or more rows with the bags containing the mother insect, and when they are sufficiently covered with the young animal, called peojillia, to remove and attach them to other rows of cactus.

This may be done once every day if the weather is fine, but if it is windy or cold, they have often to remain three or four days without moving, for the wind blows away the young insects as they creep out of the bag, and prevents them from attaching themselves to the leaves. The insect does not breed so fast if the weather is chilly, and a large portion is often killed on the leaves; even a heavy dew will destroy many at the first stage. In the October seeding in Amatitlan, when it is never required to

load the plant, the weather being fine and the mother cochineal in a thriving state, the bags may often be shifted, ten or twelve times before it has done breeding; but if the weather be at all unfavourable, or the mother cochineal in a sickly state, or too soon or too late gathered, it cannot be shifted nearly so often.

When the mother cochineal is done breeding, or when the young insect begins to be sickly and of a dark red colour, the bags are taken off, and their contents shaken out and dried in the sun; and when sifted they form, what is denominated in the country cascarilla, and in England, black cochineal, which always fetches a higher price than the silver cochineal, the name given to it when the insect is dried before commencing to breed.

During the first stage of its growth, as already remarked, the young insect is very easily injured, but when about ten days old, it is not nearly so easily destroyed. Still, as heavy showers of rain sometimes occur in October, it is nothing rare for the cochineal grower to find nearly all his labour and outlay lost, and a great part of his crop destroyed in a few minutes; but, when such misfortunes occur, all the growers suffer nearly equally, consequently the price is enhanced, and the loss is in some degree compensated by the increased value of what remains. In Amatitlan, such accidents only occur to the first crop seeded in October, the greater part of the produce of which is always used for seeding the cochineal estates in Old Guatemala in the month of January, and when the crop is not large, fetches a much higher price than it would be worth if dried for exportation.

In about twenty days after the young insect has attached itself to the leaf, it changes its skin, which is called the first "muda" (change or transformation); and in about a month more it again undergoes the same process, at each of which periods it slightly shifts its position on the leaf. At the time of the second change, the male makes its appearance in the shape of a very small fly, but how it is produced is, strange to say, not quite determined; all the natives, and even the foreigners in Guatemala, who state that they have made experiments for the purpose of ascertaining it, assert that it is produced by the female at the second change, that is to say, about the middle of its growth; but this would appear quite impossible from all data in natural history.

I had not leisure to make proper experiments, but an intelligent North American gentleman, a doctor by profession, who had done so, informed me that previously to, and some time after, the second transformation or casting of its skin, the male and female insects are nearly equal in number, and cannot be distinguished on the leaf; but that, about fifteen days after the first transformation, all the male grubs change into chrysalises, interring themselves in a downy covering, and weaving a small thread, let go their hold of the leaf, and hang by it for about fifteen days more, when the female is in the second change. About this time the chrysalis hatches, and the male makes its appearance as stated; and, almost immediately after impregnating the female, falls off the leaf and dies. When the smallest quantity of rain occurs about this period, the males are washed off

before the females are impregnated, and the insect is barren.

In from eighty to ninety days, according to the nature of the weather, the cochineal insect attains its full growth in Amatitlan, and commences to breed. It is then left upon the leaf long enough to produce a sufficient quantity of young insects for the second crop, which attach themselves to the same leaves, and in the same manner as the first; and the full grown insect is removed by touching it with a small piece of cane, and offered for sale in flat baskets, each containing about twelve pounds weight of the insect. The greater part of the crop is sent, as before stated, to Old Guatemala for the purpose of seeding the cochineal estates there. This process is nearly identical with that of the October seeding in Amatitlan, already described, only that a larger quantity of the insects are allowed to attach themselves to the leaves, and some parties attach the mother cochineal in small pieces of reed, instead of bark or cloth.

In Old Guatemala, all the cochineal estates are seeded but once in the year, from the beginning of the month of January to the middle of February, but as the climate there is considerably colder than in Amatitlan, the insect does not attain its full size, so as to be fit for gathering in less than a hundred days after it has attached itself to the plant; and, as the rainy season often commences in the beginning of May, a great part of the crop is frequently lost by being washed off by the rains before it is fit for gathering. In Amatitlan, the second crop is ready for getting in, eighty days after the first has been gathered, and is therefore always got in before the

rains commence, which certainly gives it great advantages over Old Guatemala; but the second crop is always much smaller grained and worth considerably less than the first. Labour is also much dearer in Amatitlan than Old Guatemala, and an estate of equal extent costs at least twice as much to keep it in order; the wages in the former place being $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 reals (equal to 1*s.* 3*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*) per day, and in the latter, $1\frac{1}{2}$ reals (equal to 9*d.*). Besides this, the cactus and cochineal insect have a number of enemies in Amatitlan, which do not exist in Old Guatemala. The principal injury to the former is sustained from a species of large ant, called senpope, which eats all the young shoots of the cactus, so as to prevent its increasing. The nests of this insect are very large, and sometimes extend to a depth of twenty feet in the ground, along which they run for some fifteen or twenty yards; and the insects are often so numerous, that if let alone they will entirely destroy a cochineal estate. The natives have no means of destroying them, except digging them out of the ground; and though I discovered a means of poisoning them by pouring into their holes water, into which a small quantity of corrosive sublimate had been dissolved, I do not suppose that the discovery will generally be made use of by the inhabitants, who are too stupid and ignorant to understand any thing not palpable to the eye.

The principal enemies of the cochineal insect, are three sorts of caterpillars, called by the natives guisanos (worms); the most common, resembles an ordinary caterpillar, and is produced from the egg of a small fly, in shape like a wasp, but without a sting. These are sometimes so numerous, that two

or three may be seen on each leaf of the cactus, and if not speedily taken off, will, in a month, the period of their existence, eat up nearly all the cochineal insects. Another sort spin a web, with which they entangle the insect and destroy it; and the third, called "anguilla" (the eel), which is by far the most destructive, moves over the leaf like an earth-worm, eating all the insects, when small, with surprising rapidity, and transferring itself to another leaf, proceeds as before. Luckily, this last mentioned species only makes its appearance in some years, and is never nearly so numerous as the first named. No means have yet been found of destroying these caterpillars, except employing people to pick them off, which is done at so much for every twenty grubs, according to their abundance or scarcity, the price being seldom under what is equivalent to a half-penny for each twenty, or above one penny for that number. Still, when the grubs are very numerous, it is sometimes necessary to abandon the crop of cochineal, which is not worth the expense of picking off the caterpillars; this, of course, is however a rare occurrence, and never happens to the whole of an estate of any size.

With all its objections, cochineal-growing has certainly been more profitable in Amatitlan than in Old Guatemala, or any other place yet discovered. Nearly all the cultivators in Amatitlan are well off, and many who were without means a few years ago, are now rich for Central America, having a fortune of from ten to thirty thousand dollars, while nearly all who have attempted the culti-

vation in Old Guatemala have been ruined, and very few have realised any money. Still, the supposed fatality of the climate of Amatitlan, has so great an effect as not only to raise enormously the price which must be paid to the workpeople to induce them to do the necessary labour, but keeps the value of cochineal estates rather lower than in Old Guatemala. The second crop of cochineal is fit for gathering in Amatitlan, from the end of March to the 20th of April; and the crop in Old Guatemala, from the middle of April till the 10th or 20th of May, according to the season. Nearly the whole of both these crops are dried and cleaned for exportation to Europe, of which they are the principal source of supply. But a small number of insects are preserved, and being put into small bags, similar to those before described, are attached to leaves, carefully ranged upon shelves under the long narrow buildings, called almacenes, the leaves being seeded in a similar manner to the growing plants. This must attain its full size, and commence to breed again in about ninety days, which brings it to the month of July, when the insect so reared is gathered and again attached in the same manner to fresh leaves of the cactus, ranged under cover in the same manner; this crop is again ready for gathering in the month of October, when the rains cease in Amatitlan, and is sold for seeding the cochineal estates. The price being regulated by the supply, as compared with the demand, is but little affected by the value of dry cochineal; the live insect being always then worth at least three or four times its value, in the months of April and May, when it is dried for exportation. A good

cochineal estate requires, in the month of October, from 100 to 140 pounds of the live mother insect to seed each mansana of 100 Spanish, or $89\frac{4}{9}$ English yards square; and each pound of the insect so used ought, if the weather be good and all circumstances favourable, to produce eight pounds in the crop time. The January seeding in Old Guatemala, being much heavier, as only one crop is there taken, from 150 to 170 pounds are generally used to seed each mansana. In Amatitlan, the first crop collected in January, generally yields from 800 to 1200 pounds of the live insect, from each mansana of cactus in a really good estate, which is sold at from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 reals (1*s.* 3*d.* to 4*s.* sterling) a pound, according to the demand, the abundance of the crop, &c.; but the first crop is, one year with another, calculated to pay all the expenses of weeding and managing the estate, and the cost of the seed, cochineal insect, and labour of seeding it, &c. The second crop is always dried, and each mansana will yield from 1800 to 2700 pounds of the insect, and from 600 to 900 pounds of dry cochineal, which is considered to be the net profit of the cultivator.

In Old Guatemala, each mansana ought to give 3150 to 4050 pounds of the live insect, and 1050 to 1350 pounds of dry cochineal, three pounds of the live insect yielding as nearly as possible one of dry cochineal.

The cost of production in Old Guatemala, one year with another, allowing for the current losses from rain, &c., is rated at 4 reals (or 2*s.* sterling) per pound. The cochineal insect when not intended for breeding, is, as soon as gathered, spread out very

thin upon flat shallow trays, made of cane, and covered with cotton cloth, and put into stoves constructed on purpose, each capable of containing from 100 to 200 baskets, and either heated by burning charcoal put in large clay vessels made on purpose, or by a small brick flue, into which wood can be put and lighted from the outside (the former method is the most costly and tedious, but gives the finest coloured cochineal); when completely dry, it is sifted, cleaned, and packed in bales, covered with an untanned ox hide, containing 150 pounds, in which state it is sent to Europe for sale. During the wet season, a cochineal estate requires almost constant attention in cleaning and keeping down the weeds, and this must be done at least five times in the year in Amatitlan, or the cactus will be injured; though in Old Guatemala not more than two or three cleanings are given. The cactus must also be pruned at least twice in the year, once at the commencement of the rainy season in May, to make it sprout strongly, and again at the commencement of the dry season in October, when it is necessary to remove the long shoots, which would by their weight break down the cactus, and to trim the plants so as to give them an equal height and form.

In Amatitlan a good cochineal estate in full bearing is worth from 600 to 800 dollars a mansana, and somewhat more in Old Guatemala; but in the latter a great proportion of the lands fit for growing the cactus belongs to the corporation, who, instead of selling, let them out in leases of nine years, which enables the lessee to take off six or seven crops of cochineal, as the plant is fit for seeding in two or

three years, according to the quality of the land. During the last three years, the increase in the number of cochineal estates has been very great, especially in Old Guatemala; and it is calculated that those now planted will be capable of producing at least 12,000 bales of 150 pounds each of dry cochineal, while hitherto the produce of the best years has not much exceeded half that quantity. The increase in Amatitlan is also considerable; and the whole valley is now covered with cochineal estates, which may, jointly, be capable of producing 5000 to 6000 bales. A number of new cochineal estates have also, within the last two years, been planted at Villa Nueva, which is four leagues from Guatemala and two from Amatitlan, and also at Chiquimala, and in the province of Vera Paz at Salamar; so that, taken together, the produce of the state of Guatemala should shortly be equal to about 20,000 bales of cochineal, which is considerably more than the entire annual consumption of the article.

Hence, either the use of the dye must be greatly extended or the price must fall so low as to force part of the cultivators to abandon the business. When I first proposed going to manage a cochineal estate in Amatitlan, most of the natives and Spaniards told me not to think of it, as it would be impossible for a stranger to manage the natives; but, aware of the spirit of exaggeration common to the Spaniards and their descendants, I paid little regard to such stories, and I found that I uniformly got better on with the work-people than the natives or Spaniards themselves. Still it cannot be denied that many of the people who came to labour in Amatitlan are the

refuse of all Central America. I was never personally attacked or even insulted except once, when one of the labourers with whom I had found fault drew his knife in a threatening manner; but I hit him a blow on the head with one of the pistols I always carried in my belt, not choosing to shoot him, as I saw he was half intoxicated, and he afterwards begged my pardon and thanked me for my forbearance.

The following occurrence shows a curious trait of Central American character. As I required a large number of the square pieces of bark called cartuches, which are used in seeding the cactus as before described, I had a number of people sent to the woods near the coast to gather bark and cut them, and, in accordance with the uniform custom of the country, I made them all small advances to maintain them during the work, to be repaid on the delivery of the cartuches. One of these advances was made to three men, who agreed to work jointly, two being strangers and one a resident in the town. After a rather long absence, the two strangers appeared with a small quantity of cartuches, the value of which did little more than repay their advance. They reported that they had left their companion sick in a town called Santa Rosa, and proposed returning for more cartuches. I gave them some medicine to take to their sick companion; but the wife of the supposed sick man, hearing of the arrival of the others, came to inquire about her husband, and, when I told her what I had heard, appeared very suspicious of its truth; and the two men having gone out, she commenced examining the bundles of clothes which they had left in the corridor of my house, and finding

among them part of her husband's clothes bloody, she went to the judge, who had the two men apprehended and put in prison. On their examination, they told quite a different story from what they had related to me; the man whom they had left behind, they said, had attempted to murder one of the others, and had been seized and put in prison by the alcalde (Indian judge) of Santa Rosa: one of them showed a severe wound partially healed, which he stated the other had given him. I conceived this to be but a very clumsily invented fiction, and made no doubt whatever that they had murdered their companion; but the judge determined on sending an aguacil (constable) to Santa Rosa to inquire into the truth of the matter, and requested the authorities of that town to send the other man, if there, to Amatitlan. In due course the aguacil returned with some others from Santa Rosa, bringing the man prisoner, and, upon his examination, he at once confessed that in a fit of intoxication he had wounded one of the other men; so that their second story was pretty nearly correct, and they were set at liberty. Being surprised at such an unaccountable love of prevarication, I asked them why they had not at once told me the truth. The reply was almost similar to what I have received on innumerable occasions — that if they told the truth they feared it might have resulted in doing them some harm, and they had consequently concocted between them the story which they told me. It appeared that the clothes which were found by the man's wife, and the part of the cartuches belonging to him had, on a principle of Indian law or equity, been made over to the man he had wounded by the

alcalde of Santa Rosa, and, had the men told the truth, there could have been no blame whatever attached to them. The natives of Amatitlan are exceedingly mean in all their transactions, and will often rather lose their crop of cochineal, than pay the smallest advance to the labourers over the wages to which they have been accustomed. Many of them, worth 20,000 or 30,000 dollars, do not spend a media (3*d.* sterling) a day; and keep no servant, living in a dirty little hut of which the poorest Indian might be ashamed. On one occasion, noticing a boy of one of the principal and richest families, whose leg was set crooked, rendering him a most miserable object, I inquired of his mother how it had happened, and she very coolly told me that he had fallen with a horse, which had tumbled upon him; that he was brought home with his leg broken, and that they had tied it up as well as they could, but did not send for the doctor as he would have charged too much. I replied, "Well, but what are a few dollars compared with deforming the boy, and making him a wretched cripple for life?" To this she answered, with a good deal of surprise, "Well, I am sure you do not know how hard we have worked for our money, or you would not talk so."

The temperature of Amatitlan is several degrees hotter than Guatemala, but is still far from oppressive, except occasionally in the end of the dry season in March and April; and the picturesque nature of the scenery in the neighbourhood, would render it a most pleasant residence were not the climate found to be very fatal to Europeans, and even more so to the natives of the neighbouring towns, great numbers

of whom die in the rainy season. Even the natives are not exempt from intermittent fevers; this, however, I attribute in a great measure to the dissipated and irregular life led by the mestizoes, mulattoes, and even the white Creoles, having myself never felt any bad effects from the climate of Amatitlan, though often exposed to the sun all day, and in the rainy season wet several times daily. To the Spaniards who have attempted to settle, the climate has certainly also proved rather fatal; but, as those who came out to America are the very worst of the most debased provinces of Spain, the greater part being literally the sweepings of Cadiz, they at once adopt all the vices of the Creoles in addition to their own, which are neither few nor trifling, and generally lead an even more debased and irregular life, so that it is not to be wondered at that they cannot stand a trying climate. The principal towns near Amatitlan are, to the S. W., Paliny and Esquintla, on the road to the port of Iztapa; Metapa to the N. E., and Barias to the eastward, besides the small village of Apacaga to the south. In none of these places does the cultivation of cochineal succeed from various causes, except in the last named, where the suitable lands are very trifling in extent. Paliny is a pretty little village three leagues distant from Amatitlan, with very productive lands in the vicinity, which are planted to some extent with sugar-cane. The cactus grows well, but there is a large ant which devours the cochineal insect, and these are so numerous as to prevent its cultivation. It is imbedded in a beautiful valley surrounded with low green hills mostly covered with long grass, and, were it situated in a more advanced

country, it would be famed, even in Europe, for the beauty of its scenery. Esquintla, situated in a continuation of the same valley, which then opens out to a considerable extent, is three leagues nearer the port of Iztapa, and is a town of some size, containing 5000 or 6000 inhabitants. The heat is too great for rearing cochineal, but far from oppressive. A beautiful clear river flows past the town, which is imbedded in orange and lemon groves mixed with cocoa-nut, aguacata, guava, and a vast variety of fruit trees, both indigenous and foreign. It is from Esquintla that Guatemala is principally supplied with fruit, which owing to the fineness of the climate, and the great fertility of the soil grows naturally without the least cultivation. The climate, though warm, is equal all the year, and remarkably pleasant and healthy. Sickness is almost unknown, and the natives live to a great age, many of them exceeding 100 years; the adjacent river abounds with fish, and the woods abound in all sorts of game and wild animals. Venison is so cheap that an entire deer may be always bought from four reals to a dollar (or 2*s.* to 4*s.* sterling). Esquintla is one of the favourite resorts of the inhabitants of Guatemala, who proceed thither in the month of March to bathe and amuse themselves, remaining about six weeks, till the beginning of May, when they proceed to Amatitlan for the same purposes.

Barias is a village containing 500 or 600 inhabitants, principally workmen of the neighbouring cattle estate. It is most beautifully situated on a verdant, undulating plain, the surrounding mountains rising in the most magnificent grandeur on all sides; little

is at present cultivated, though the soil is of the richest description, and all sorts of tropical productions, and most of those of temperate regions thrive well. This plain, which is four and a half leagues distant from Amatitlan, is three or four leagues square, and like innumerable other parts of the state, only requires industrious inhabitants to make it a complete garden.

Metapa is about one and a half leagues from Amatitlan, and five from Guatemala. It lies in a rich plain of three or four leagues in length, and half a league in breadth; it was a seat of the Jesuits, but the buildings they occupied now present considerable ruins. The population may amount to 500 or 600, the only production being canes (cana Castilla), which are sent for sale to all parts of the vicinity, being much used in building houses, sheds, and almacenes for preserving the cochineal insect in winter. Here, and at Barias, the rains commence a month sooner, and end a month later than in Amatitlan, which, although favourable to the growth of all sorts of vegetation, prevents the cochineal insect from being successfully cultivated. In Barias and Metapa, the average temperature, which does not vary more than five or six degrees in all the year, is about 69 Fahrenheit, and the climate extremely salubrious, and well fitted for the residence of Europeans.

The village of Apacaga is about a league and a half from Amatitlan, above which it is situated at least 1000 feet; the road to it is up a steep and rugged hill, the top of which, however, extends into a short plain about a mile square. The village does not contain above fifty inhabitants, who are employed

in supplying Amatitlan with building and fire wood. Having often visited this village, I had a strong desire to ascend an active volcano which rises close to it; and, on the 15th of February, 1846, set out for that purpose, having procured a native to act in some degree as guide, though the volcano had not previously been ascended by any person as far as I could ascertain.

The volcanoes of Apacaga are three, called "Agua" (water), "Cenizco" (cinders), and "Tormentos" (tempests or thunders). We had proposed ascending the Volcano of Cenizco, but on approaching it, I determined on that of Tormentos instead, although my guide assured me it would be impossible.

The Volcano of Tormentos is much the highest of the three, and its name is derived from its being nearly always covered by dark heavy clouds of black smoke, through which scattered gleams of fire are seen at night; but its top is rarely visible, being always concealed by sulphury vapours and dense smoke. Now and then, loud reports, like broken peals of thunder, and frequent shocks of earthquake, proceed from it.

About 8. A.M., we reached the small village of Apacaga, which is about two leagues distant, in a direct line from the foot of the volcano, to which we proceeded, (leaving our horses at the village,) as direct as the rugged and broken nature of the country would permit, but we did not reach it till the sun had considerably declined to the horizon. We commenced the ascent amidst broken and charred rocks, intermixed with cinders and broken pieces of lava. After about two hours hard toil, we approached

the part of the mountain which is covered with smoke, and the discordant noises we heard as we approached it, became loud and terrific, while the ground shook as with one continued earthquake. Of a sudden, we were enveloped amidst the smoke, and heard a loud explosion, which scattered ashes all around us. My guide exclaimed, "O! santissima Maria somus perdidos" (Oh! most holy Mary we are lost), and called out to me, "for God's sake let us return if it be possible;" but I felt so strong a curiosity to go on that I would not be deterred, so I answered, "go back if you like, nothing shall prevent my going forward." Scrambling up like a cat among the cinders, which were in some places so hot as to burn my shoes, and guiding myself by the flashes of lightning which played about the volcano, and the direction from which the loudest noises proceeded, as the smoke entirely obscured the vision, I slowly ascended among the lava and cinders; which however occupied a good deal of time, and in my eagerness to penetrate into the strange scene before me, I did not reflect that the day must be passing. At last, a lurid glare penetrating from amongst the smoke, and the increased proximity and brilliancy of the flashes of lightning, accompanied by a noise like that of the burning of an immense furnace, showed my near approach to the grand centre of the volcano. I slowly proceeded towards it, but at last feeling exhausted by my exertions, I sat down on a block of lava and began to eat a piece of bread I carried in my pocket, but I was roused by a tremendous explosion, louder than any thunder I ever heard; an immense lurid flame rose from the crater, the intense

light of which seemed to penetrate the smoke, and illuminate all the neighbouring country. The ground felt as if sinking below me. I felt myself thrown with violence among the ashes, and lay for some time stunned with the noise, and blinded with the light. When, after a little, I recovered my observation, I heard the smothered roar of the volcano near, but faint, and saw the smoke slowly rising from the crater, the rocking of the ground had ceased, and the eruption seemed to have passed over; here and there a twinkling star appeared through the vapour, and the moon was for a moment seen, now and then through the smoke; the dread solemnity of the scene might make an impression on the least sentimental.

I sat still some time, as it were bewildered, looking at the red glare of the crater which appeared like the chimney of a huge furnace. I then attempted to approach its edge, but the heat and suffocating vapours prevented my reaching it within about twenty or thirty yards. Being aware that it would be impossible to find my way among the precipices, forming the sides of the mountain at night. I waited till the grey light, penetrating through the smoke, announced the approach of day, and having found a more accessible path than that by which I had ascended, emerged from the smoke just as the sun was rising, clear behind the eastern hills, and the sky of an azure blue without the least speck or cloud. In about two hours more I reached the rugged plain below the mountain of thunders, and winding my way to the village, found my guide waiting, though it appeared, with little hope of again seeing me.

I mounted my horse, and we reached Amatitlan a little after noon.

This mountain, though perpetually burning, has not made any destructive eruption for seventy years, when it vomited an immense mass of lava and cinders, entirely destroying the village of Tres Rios, ("three rivers,") about two leagues distant, and the three rivers from which it took its name have entirely disappeared. The immense masses of lava, in many places more than a hundred feet thick, show the magnitude of the eruption, and the lava, which has run from the mountain like a great river, looks as fresh as if it had just cooled. The volcano of Cenizco still continues to emit a little smoke occasionally, though there is no tradition of any eruption; it is of a conical form and composed entirely of black cinders, without the least trace of vegetation in any part of the cone, but it is much lower than either of the other two peaks, not exceeding, I should think, a thousand feet, while the volcano of Tormentos must be four or five thousand at least. The volcano of Aqua would appear, like that of old Guatemala, which bears the same name, not actually to vomit water, as the natives suppose; but it is probable that the crater having been long extinct, the vent has gradually got stopped up and the basin filled with water from the winter rains, and finally, the pressure of an immense weight of water has broken the edge of the crater and poured a destructive torrent over the neighbouring country, a catastrophe which last occurred about a century ago, when it did not, however, like the volcano of Old Guatemala, wash away the capital, but only a few Indian huts, and was little talked of, so that one

may live his whole life in Guatemala, only eleven leagues distant, without knowing of the existence of the volcano.

Besides the last catastrophe, there exist along its sides ample vestiges of many more of a similar nature, looking as if a mighty river had been poured out of the crater. It is considerably lower than the volcano of Tormentos, and its sides are so broken and uneven, that it could easily be ascended.

The three volcanic peaks are so near each other that their bases almost unite, which, I believe, is a phenomenon to be seen in no other part of the world.

On the road to Amatitlan, at a distance of four leagues from Guatemala, is the town of Villa Nueva, where the cochineal insect has been cultivated, though to a much smaller extent than at Old Guatemala or Amatitlan, and much less successfully than at the latter place. The climate is a little better for the cultivation than that of Old Guatemala, but the soil is not so good for growing the cactus, and the poverty of the inhabitants has prevented the plantations from being extended, so that hitherto it has never produced above three or four hundred bales of cochineal; but of late several new estates have been planted, and a small piece of land in a hollow called the Hoja del Aqua ("leaf of water"), containing about a hundred British acres, is said to produce two crops of cochineal as well as in Amatitlan. The people of Villa Nueva have a large number of almacenes for preserving the insect during the winter season, and annually supply Amatitlan with about five thousand pounds of the mother insect for the October seeding.

The town is well situated in an undulating plain, though the situation is much inferior to many others in the neighbourhood; it may contain from four to five thousand inhabitants, who are an industrious and quiet race of people for Central America. Here on the 11th of September, 1838, General Salazar, with nine hundred government troops, defeated Carrera at the head of a force four times as large, making a great slaughter of the Indians who accompanied him, and the town was in consequence called Villa de Victoria ("town of Victory"), but the new name has been dropped since Carrera obtained supreme power.

On the 24th of April, we left Amatitlan for Sonsonate and San Miguel. Passing the town of Patapa, which I have before described, about a league further, we reached Santa Ignes, a village prettily situated at the head of Amatitlan lake, in a small valley. It contains extensive ruins of a large establishment of the Jesuits; and the situation, like all those selected by that body, is well chosen. The soil is a deep black loam, but not a fourth part of the valley is now cultivated, and the lands once cleared have returned to a state of nature. The population does not exceed three or four hundred.

Two leagues further we passed the small village of San José, consisting of twenty or thirty Indian huts upon a hill, and two leagues further a village called the "Rosario," containing perhaps two or three hundred inhabitants. This was also one of the seats of the Jesuits; but part of the buildings are now appropriated as the residence of a cattle estate. A fine aqueduct is now to be seen in ruins. Immediately after-

wards I passed through immense masses of scoriæ which extend for about a league and a half, entirely covering the face of the country, and in many places appearing quite fresh and generally destitute of all vegetation. As there is no volcanic mountain in sight from which these masses may be supposed to have been ejected, it is difficult to form a guess whence such vast quantities of volcanic matter can have proceeded, unless it be supposed that the level of the country has entirely changed since their deposition.

At sunset we reached the village of the "Bega," attached to the principal residence in the immense cattle estate of Don Jorge Ponce. Failing to get accommodated in the village I was obliged to trespass on Don Jorge's kindness, but was most hospitably received. The house is a huge building, without any taste or beauty, and not incumbered with much furniture. Don Jorge told me that the temperature is not very different from that of Amatitlan, and that the wet season is as late in commencing and as soon over, so that it would doubtless prove suitable for the cultivation of cochineal. At present nothing is cultivated but a little maize, though there are immense tracts of the finest land suitable for the growth of any production; the principal value of the estate being its fine pasturage for fattening cattle for the Guatemala market.

The state of San Salvador appears to be in a most exhausted and ruined condition from the effects of the long-continued civil war. All sorts of industry are nearly at an end, and the people are so accustomed to being robbed and plundered, that they appear to have lost all desire of raising any thing more than

what may be required for their immediate wants. The fair of San Miguel has also sadly fallen off; the importers from South America have for the last two years done so badly, that only one vessel arrives with a small quantity of merchandise, but even that is more than the people have cash to pay for. All classes are evidently so demoralised and reduced that many years of a firm government would be necessary to restore the state to a flourishing condition. I had in San Miguel a long conversation with the new President, Don Benito Aguilar, a quiet man of moderate principles, a doctor of medicine, and well informed for the country. He appeared very anxious to give protection to industry and encourage strangers to settle in the country; but I fear that his talents and determination will not be found sufficient to rule this turbulent state, and that his government will be a short one.

On the 14th of May, before sunrise, I started from San Miguel, congratulating myself in having this time at least escaped without an attack of fever. The day turned out extremely hot, but the mules being fresh, we reached the estate of Humanas, which is generally considered a day's journey, at 2 P. M., and we proceeded on without stopping to the river Lempa. I could not help being a good deal scorched by the burning rays of the sun, but having never hitherto in all my journeys sustained any harm from it, I concluded that I was proof against any injury from this cause. The atmosphere of Lempa is actually burning hot during the night, but a native who was at the same hut with me insisted on shutting all the doors for fear of robbers, and as the ordinary houses in

Central America never have windows, I was almost suffocated. About two o'clock in the morning I was alarmed by the doleful lamentation of my servant, who was sleeping outside the hut where I was lodged. On inquiring what was the matter he told me in a most deplorable tone that he was dying, as an insect had got into his ear and was eating his brain. I was myself suffering, and having often before seen the same accident, I adopted the simple remedy of putting a few drops of water in his ear, which the insect not liking moved out again and left the man well in ten minutes. Proceeding again before daylight I managed to get to San Salvador at 4 P. M., but in greater agony than I have ever before suffered in my life, my pulse being 134. I had in fact caught a violent rheumatic fever. I remained a week in San Salvador, making use of the most powerful remedies, but I only succeeded in reducing the fever a little, without in the least alleviating the rheumatic pains.

The third day after my arrival in San Salvador, I was surprised by an aguacil (constable) coming to my lodgings with a message that the alcalde (civic magistrate) wished to see me immediately. I told him that he must certainly have made a mistake, as the alcalde could not want anything with me, and did not even know my name: but he returned in a few minutes to say that it was not a mistake, and required my immediate attendance. Proceeding to the cabilda, I was astonished to find a claim made against me by a servant who had run away from me in the town of Nahuisalco, on account of some clothes he left behind and lost on that occasion. I told the alcalde that I did not suppose I was obliged to ac-

count for the clothes of a person who had behaved in such a manner, and that I had not thought myself bound to take charge of them, but had abandoned them as worth nothing to me: but I found that he was determined to give judgment in favour of his countryman; and, feeling indignant at such a robbery, I told him that I would not pay, but should appeal to a higher court. A gentleman who was present, and who appeared to be a lawyer, told me that it was a very unjust demand, but that if I did not settle it I should have to leave a power of attorney, and incur much more expense than the amount in question. The alcalde then proposed that I should pay half the demand, which was for 21 dollars. I offered him five dollars, and he then proposed seven, which I preferred paying to being further bothered. I was informed that, as all the civic officers are chosen by the lowest of the people from their own class, a respectable person, or, indeed, any white, has no chance whatever of having justice done him in any dispute he may have with a mestizo, or any one of the lower classes.

As there was little chance of my being cured in the way I was forced to live in San Salvador, having, as usual, no bed to lie upon, nor any possibility of obtaining such accommodation as would be required by the poorest person in Europe, I on the 25th left for Sonsonate, which I reached the same night, more dead than alive, having been forced to dismount several times and lie down on the road-side to prevent my falling off the mule. On the 27th I again proceeded on my journey. The road was in a most horrible state, and, from the nature of the soil of the ridge of hills which it is necessary to cross on the

first day's journey, was as slippery as grease. After great difficulty and several falls, I reached Apaneca, near the top of the chain of hills, in the midst of a heavy shower of rain, at 11 A.M. The rain continued for four hours, when I proceeded again on my journey, and reached Ahuachahan at sunset, covered all over with mud, and severely bruised with falling, being unable to walk, though riding in such roads is attended with great risk of breaking one's neck. Next evening we reached the town of Zalpatagua, well wet by a heavy thunder shower. Starting in the morning with a drizzling rain, which soon grew heavier, we managed, by walking the horses through the mud, to reach the Oratorio at 1 P.M.; and, the rain becoming still heavier, we were forced to remain all night, and, after two or three days most uncomfortable travelling, we at length reached Amatitlan, where I commenced curing my rheumatic fever by the only treatment I have ever found successful with myself or others (small continued doses of calomel); and in a week I was nearly quite recovered.

This was the end of what is called the "temporada" in Amatitlan, when all the idle people come from Guatemala for the nominal purpose of bathing. Every house is then full of visitors, most of them having five or six occupants, and often as many as twenty in each room. The time is spent in gambling and intrigues between the sexes, and among the visitors are many professed gamblers, who come on purpose to victimise the cochineal growers, one of whom admitted to me that he had twice played away all his crop of cochineal. Gambling tables are to be seen placed in many of the houses, with the doors wide open,

and the inhabitants who may be passing are invited in on different pretexts. The games are of different sorts, no doubt of Spanish origin, and the stakes at the principal tables are generally for bales of cochineal, one of which is represented by each counter, so that if the simple natives can be induced to play, they are almost certain to be deprived of all their crop by the Guatemala sharpers. It is, however, most surprising to see how quietly a native will lose all his property at the gambling table; the utmost sign of impatience he will ever show being the exclamation, Jesus, Santissima Maria, ("Jesus, most holy Mary,") in a gay tone of voice, though perhaps the victim may be forced to sell his cochineal estate, and his family in a moment reduced from comparative comfort to the condition of common labourers. Indeed, it has always astonished me to see the great command of countenance possessed by all the Spaniards and their descendants. Though they are, perhaps, the most avaricious people in the world, they will hear of any loss or disaster, however severe or unexpected, without the slightest apparent emotion, or the least change of expression, generally passing some joke upon the occasion with more than usual good-humour.

Before concluding this journal, I must not omit to mention the lake of Cojutepeke, the native name of which is Illobasco, which I have already cursorily noticed, but have since ascertained that it is subject to a most singular phenomenon which renders it worthy of a fuller description. This lake is, as already stated, a few leagues distant from the large town of Cojutepeke in the state of San Salvador, from which it may

be readily seen. It is about twelve miles long, of an irregular shape, on an average about five miles broad, and surrounded on all sides (except a small opening at which a stream of water runs out) by majestic and precipitous mountains. Some small rivulets flow into the lake, and the surrounding scenery is most romantic and beautiful. The lake is, in some parts, of great depth, though no attempts have been made to ascertain it with exactness. In smooth weather the water has no peculiar appearance or difference from that of other lakes, nor can parties then walking on the banks observe any fish, but after a brisk wind it assumes a dark green colour, and the fish flock to the shores in such numbers that the natives not only catch them in large quantities with nets, but in buckets, and even with the hand. This singular phenomenon is called by the natives la cosecha de pescados ("the fish harvest"); and the Indians suppose that a demon who lives in the middle of the lake then troubles the water, the fish escaping from his presence to the borders of the lake. The most likely explanation would appear to be, that the middle of the lake contains a number of thermal springs charged with carbonic acid gas and some mineral which colours the water. This water, being heavier than that which enters from the mountain streams, remains at the bottom of the lake and the pure water covers the upper surface, so that in smooth weather the fish find no difficulty in maintaining themselves in the uncontaminated water, readily avoiding that at the bottom of the lake, in which they cannot exist; but when the lake is agitated by strong winds the mineral water becomes

mixed with that which is superincumbent, and the whole body of the lake then becomes destructive to the fish, which are compelled to repair to its borders, where it is shallow, and consequently composed entirely of pure water without any understrata of that charged with the gas or other noxious principle.

This lake is certainly well worth the minute examination of men of science, and, though I have no pretensions to that character, I regretted that on all the occasions I passed through the town of Cojutepeke I was too much hurried to spare time for a full examination

CHAP. V.

HISTORY OF CENTRAL AMERICA FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1821, TO 1ST FEBRUARY, 1839.

THE states now known as the republic of Central America formed (with the addition of the province of Chiapas, which has joined Mexico) the Spanish captain-generalship of Guatemala, a name which still attaches to the largest state of the Confederation. The other states had the same names and nearly the same divisions as at present, but were all subject to the Captain-General, who resided in Guatemala and appointed Intendentes (governors) for the subordinate provinces.

On the 15th September, 1821, the city of Guatemala proclaimed its absolute independence from the mother country of Spain, and invited the other provinces of the captain-generalship to follow its example. As the Spanish authorities had almost no force at their disposal, they had no resource but quietly to submit to the declaration: many of them joined the new government which was then provisionally established, and the remainder returned to Spain, or repaired to the island of Cuba, without attempting to offer a futile resistance to what appeared to be a general movement of the country. Upon the intelligence of the movement in Guatemala the pro-

vinces of San Salvador and Honduras immediately followed their example, deposing the authorities of the Spanish government, most of whom, however, joined the new order of things. Being generally natives of the country, they of course had no objection to exchange a delegated for an independent authority, which they thought they would be enabled to maintain with facility; but the government authorities of the province of Nicaragua (actuated, it would appear, by the bishop, who shrewdly guessed that the revolution would be destructive of his authority,) refused to follow the example of the capital of the captain-generalship, stating that they deferred declaring their independence till they saw what sort of government might be established. On the 11th of October, however, they altered this resolution, declaring for the plan of Iguala, after the example of Mexico, the object of which was to offer the government to a Spanish prince, who should, however, be independent of the mother country; in this they were shortly afterwards joined by the city of Quesaltenango in the department of the Altos of Guatemala.

The new government of Guatemala immediately proceeded to abolish all the restrictions upon foreign commerce, which had been enacted in the time of the Spanish government; decreeing the liberty of the press, and the abolition of all monopolies, with many other liberal measures; but they were not destined to proceed long in their career, as the adventurer Iturbide, having been proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, used a mixture of persuasion and force to induce the provinces of the old captain-generalship of Guatemala to join that government. Some engagements took

place between the two parties, and blood was for the first time spilt in Guatemala on the 30th of November, 1821; but the Mexican party appeared to gain ground, being joined by the capitals of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and the city of Quesaltenanga, and only opposed by San Salvador and Granada. The Mexican government was proclaimed in Guatemala on the 5th of January, 1822, and by a decree of the Emperor dated the 4th of November of the same year, the old captain-generalship was divided into three districts, each bearing the title of captain-generalship; namely, Chiapas, Sacataquez, and Costa Rica, the capital of the first being Ciudad Real, of the second the city of Guatemala, and of the third Leon in Nicaragua. But as the people everywhere showed themselves unfavourable to this new division, it was never carried into effect, and the names and divisions of the old provinces continued to be used. San Salvador, however, refused to agree to its incorporation with the Mexican Empire, and, on the 3rd of June, General Arzee attacked the capital of that state for the purpose of reducing it, but was defeated, and his forces completely routed and dispersed. The provisional congress of this state, seeing their inability to resist all the others backed by Mexico, passed an act, bearing date the 2nd of December, 1822, declaring themselves united to the government of the United States of North America, but this decree remained entirely null, and it is not known what reply, if any, was made to it by the United States. San Salvador was immediately afterwards invested by Don Vicente Fisiola with two thousand Imperial troops, and after the loss of about a hundred men was taken. The inde-

pendent party then submitted, and the whole country might be considered as joined to the Mexican Empire, though Granada in Nicaragua and San Jose in Costa Rica still refused to acknowledge it: but the fall of Iturbide having again thrown Mexico into a state of anarchy, it ceased to give any support to its party, which formed a very small minority in the captain-generalship of Guatemala, and insurrections took place against the Mexican authorities, who were successively expelled from all the States, or joined the independent party; and General Fisiola, at the time the most popular officer in the country, having called an assembly of national representatives, all the provinces resolved to unite and form an independent government, except Chiapas, which refused to assent to the resolution and adhered to Mexico; the remaining provinces, namely, Guatemala, including the Altos, San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, agreed to form a federal government closely resembling that of the United States of North America; each state in a similar manner forming a separate internal government, the custom duties, being, however, collected by the federal government and a supreme court of appeal in civil suits created; the federal government to take the name of the Republic of Central America.

The same assembly afterwards proceeded to decree the abolition of all titles of nobility and the Spanish title of Don: a new flag of blue, white, and blue, placed horizontally, was adopted, and new armorial bearings, being a representation of the sun rising behind a ridge of mountains, and the words, "Deus, Union, Libertad," (God, Union, Liberty). They also

abolished the sale of papal bulls and indulgences, and several other abuses of the Spanish Government. Many liberal and very excellent laws were passed by this assembly, of which unfortunately only the record now remains. Among others, it was enacted that the property of strangers resident in the Republic should, under all circumstances, be respected, and that neither they nor their property should be interfered with, even in case of war with the country of which they were natives. That they might practise any profession or trade without hinderance, or purchase and hold land and houses, or any other property, having in every respect the same privileges as natives of the country. The Republic appeared quiet and contented, and every thing wore a prosperous and improving appearance at the end of the year 1823.

In the commencement of 1824, the peace of the Republic was, however, disturbed by insurrections in Nicaragua. On the 13th of January, the mob of the city of Leon forced the provisional government to remove Basilio Carrillo from the chief command, and substitute Carmen Salazar in his place; and on the 4th of May, the mob and soldiers raised another insurrection, deposing the governor of the city of Leon, Justo Milla, and naming Pablo Melendez in his place, but the latter was a few days afterwards deposed in another insurrection; and on the 22nd of July, Cleto Ordonez, an artilleryman, having managed to gain the favour of the mob and common soldiers, (who in Central America are always mixed with the populace, and agree with them in their acts and opinions,) got himself proclaimed commander-general of the province.

but his authority was resisted by the towns of Managua and Nicaragua, which set up another government, formed of a junta of their inhabitants. On the 6th of August, some districts of the city of Leon again rose in insurrection, for the purpose of re-establishing the authority of Pablo Melendez, who had a few days before been deposed by Ordonez. The insurgents were repulsed by the new authorities, but not before they had plundered a great part of the city, ill-treating the women and murdering the men who fell in their way, so that Leon suffered all the horrors that could have been inflicted by the invasion of a savage enemy. Unfortunately, this appeared to be only the commencement of a state of continual anarchy, which has reduced this city (formerly one of the finest in the new world) to little more than a mass of ruins; inflicting greater injury than any earthquake or volcano has ever done, even in the country so remarkable for these catastrophes.

On the 9th of August the town of Viejo Chinendega, in the same province, joined the party of Managua; and with their joint forces, amounting to two thousand men, invested Leon, the capital of the state; and on the 14th of the same month another body of troops in the interest of the Managua party, commanded by Coronel Chrisanto Sacano, attacked the town of Granada, which had declared for the party of Ordonez, or the Leonese faction, but, after a number of petty skirmishes, retired without being able to take the town; and a few days afterwards a body of Leonese and Granada troops attacked Managua with the same result. On the 13th of September the forces of Viejo Chinendega and Managua,

under the command of Coronel Chrisanto Sacano and Juan José Salas, a Colombian officer, attacked Leon, and after a number of skirmishes took possession of the suburbs and the greater part of the city, the besieged being hemmed in in the market-place and some of the adjoining streets, which were barricaded and desperately defended. The siege lasted 114 days, and during that period the greater part of the city was plundered; upwards of 900 houses were burnt or demolished, and both parties acted with a degree of cruelty and barbarity almost unheard of among the most savage nations; and although members of the same family were often engaged on different sides, no mercy was shown by them to their fellow-countrymen and relations, neither age nor sex being respected. The very churches were flooded with the blood of victims who had taken refuge within them, such being (as might be expected) principally the old and infirm, women and children, upon whom the ferocious soldiery glutted their fury, for want of other victims: still the besiegers were finally compelled to retire on the 4th of January, 1825, leaving the city of Leon in a state of ruin, from which it has never since recovered.

In the commencement of the year 1825 General Arzee entered the state with a body of San Salvador troops, and both parties submitted to him with little resistance, so that the state of Nicaragua was again for a short time reduced to acknowledge the federal authorities; though the seeds of anarchy, which were soon to spread to the other parts of the Re-

public, were not extirpated, but merely smothered for a brief interval.

The other states forming the Republic of Central America remained quiet during the years 1824 and 1825, and increased in wealth and prosperity, while the national assembly continued to enact wise and useful laws, though many of them, as it afterwards appeared, were too liberal for the backward state of the country. On the 17th of April, 1824, a decree was passed declaring all the slaves absolutely free, and further that slavery should never in future exist in any part of the territory of Central America, the citizens being prohibited from carrying on the slave trade under heavy penalties. The decree produced but little alteration in the labour of the country, as the slaves were very few in number, not exceeding five or six hundred at most, and were nearly all employed as household servants; had they been more numerous so sweeping a measure must have excited great resistance.

On the 15th of May, the national convention agreed that a congress should be called, each of the states having respectively the following number of representatives: namely, Guatemala 18, Honduras 11, Nicaragua 13, and Costa Rica 11. Those of Guatemala met in the city of Old Guatemala, of Honduras in Aguanqueteric, of Nicaragua in the town of Managua, and of Costa Rica in San Jose; the congress of the state of San Salvador, composed of eleven members, had previously met in the capital of that state.

The states were also to send deputies to a federal congress, to meet in the city of Guatemala for regu-

lating the general government, in the following proportions; namely Guatemala 17 representatives, San Salvador 9, Honduras 6, Nicaragua 6, and Costa Rica 2. On the 20th of August the new government was acknowledged by Mexico, which had previously given up all attempts to recover its lost dominion in Central America. During the remainder of 1824 the representative assemblies were occupied in defining the boundaries of the different states, and dividing them into provinces; regulations which can possess no interest to European readers, or indeed to any person out of the country.

The first federal congress met on the 6th of February, 1825, and afterwards had eleven sessions previously to the year 1838, when the federal union was virtually dissolved, all the different states having proclaimed themselves independent, and refused to assent to any national government. General Arzee was elected the first president of Central America, and installed in his office on the 29th of April. In the same month a federal senate met in Guatemala, elected in a similar manner to that body in the U. S. of North America, the vice-president of the republic, Mariano Beltraneno, being also appointed president of the senate. In this year the state of San Salvador, moved by jealousy at the authority claimed over that state by the Bishop of Guatemala, appointed Dr. Matras Delegado bishop of San Salvador; and although the pope disapproved formally of the appointment, and at the suggestion of the Archbishop of Guatemala threatened to excommunicate the state government, he retained his office about four years. But this occurrence caused a violent

dispute between the states of Guatemala and San Salvador, which was only to be decided by an appeal to arms, and it has to this day left a rankling hatred between the two states, ready always to break out into open violence. Shortly afterwards, Costa Rica, which previously had been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Nicaragua, followed the example of appointing a separate bishop; but the people of that state being of a pacific disposition, it had not a similar result, and the two states now remain without any bishop, or much probability of one being again appointed.

A supreme court of legal appeal was this year also established in Guatemala, Dr. Tomas Ant. Oberon being the first president. Guatemala and the other provinces also appointed State Courts in place of the old Spanish tribunals, but the laws and customs, and most of the offices belonging to the old courts, were retained.

The commencement of the year 1826 was marked by an attempt to revive the Spanish authority in the state of Costa Rica — a Spaniard, called Jose Zamara, having with that object excited an insurrection in the town of Alkajuela, but he appeared to have acted with the most foolish rashness, and meeting with no support, was seized and shot by order of government.

On the 6th of September of this year, General Arzee, the President of the Republic, having secret information of the intention of the authorities of Guatemala to rebel against the federal government, caused Señ Jose Barrundia, Governor of the State, to be arrested in the government house, and the

civic militia to be disarmed. Taken by surprise, they offered no resistance whatever. The President shortly afterwards, on his own authority, convoked an extraordinary national congress to meet in the town of Cojutepeke, in the State of San Salvador, for the purpose of considering and remedying the discontent of the different states, but the state government of San Salvador, actuated by a factious opposition to the federal government, directed the representatives to meet in the town of Ahuachapan, and the consequence of these contradictory instructions was, that no meeting took place. Immediately after this, the continued disturbances commenced, which have since reduced most of the states of the republic to the verge of ruin.

On the 13th of October, the mob of the city of Quesaltenango, the capital of the province of the Altos, rose and murdered the vice-governor Cerilio Flores, then acting governor of the state of Guatemala, in the parish church. Several of the members of government were also assassinated, and the remainder of them and the representatives of congress had to escape for their lives, leaving the state without any form of government. On the 18th of the same month, Coronel José Pierzan defeated the insurgents in Salcaya, and entered Quesaltenango without resistance, but on the 28th of the month was in turn attacked by Brigadier Francisco Cascaras with a body of federal troops and totally defeated.

On the 31st of December, the objections entertained by the president to the meeting of congress in Guatemala, being removed by the destruction of the members of the former government in Quesalte-

nango, the representatives met in the capital of that state. In this year, a law was passed in the state of Guatemala, preventing either sex from entering convents under the age of twenty-three, or taking the monastic vows under twenty-five, a measure soon followed up by the suppression of these institutions.

Two members of the senate having retired on the 2nd of September, that body was dissolved, and afterwards dispensed with.

On the 29th of July of this year, a treaty of friendship and commerce was signed between the Republic and the government of the U. S. of North America: this treaty, which expired in 1837, admitted the produce and manufactures of the U. S. of North America at one-half the duties paid by all other countries, or ten per cent, and also stipulated that citizens of Central America should, on entering the U. S. of N. America become citizens of that country, and that citizens of the U. S. of N. America should do the same on entering Central America: the latter stipulation has, I believe, in no case been claimed, and was manifestly anything but an advantage to North American citizens sojourning in a country without any stable form of government, where the natives were exposed to all sorts of robbery and imposition.

In the commencement of 1827, Nicaragua was again the scene of disturbances. The vice-governor of the State of Juan, Arguello, having excited an insurrection, forcibly dissolved the state legislature then sitting in the town of Granada. This was the signal for a renewal of insurrections in all parts of the state, three or four parties springing up, each pretending

to consult the general good, but in reality only aiming at the supreme power, for the purpose of plundering and oppressing all the rest of the inhabitants. A detailed history of the petty revolts and skirmishes which took place would present no interest, as it resembled a general mania, the populace one day taking part with one factious demagogue, and the following day with another, without being able to assign any reason for such excitement. On the 14th of September, Coronel Cleto Ordonez again excited an insurrection of the troops in Leon, and deposed the Vice-governor, but was very shortly afterwards in turn deposed, and the state of Nicaragua continued split up into petty factions, none of which were sufficiently strong to enforce the law, or establish a settled government.

On the 1st of March, Mariano Aycinena, an old Spaniard of noble family, was popularly elected governor of the State of Guatemala: from this time the division of the Republic into two factions, called liberals and serviles, may be dated, the former being composed of the middle classes, and the latter of a union between the old Spaniards and the lowest of the mob.

The former advanced just and liberal measures, but with far too great precipitation for a country accustomed to the despotic government of Spain, while the latter strove, by every means, to check the movement, calling fanaticism and all the worst passions of the mob to their assistance. Aycinena belonged to this latter party. In the same month a military tribunal was established in Guatemala for judging political offences in a summary manner; this

tribunal passed sentence of proscription against Dr. Molina, and eight others of the principal members of the liberal party in Guatemala; and also against Sachet a French officer, and Colonel Pierzon a native of Columbia, and the latter, being shortly afterwards taken, was immediately shot.

This example of putting to death without legal forms, was quickly followed by the other states of Central America, the chiefs of the victorious factions uniformly constituting themselves a tribunal to judge and condemn their opponents; but even this empty form was at last dispensed with, and the leading general, or assassin (which in Central America are generally synonymous terms), issued his orders to put whomsoever he thought proper to death, without condescending to assign a reason.

On the 10th of March of the same year, a division of the federal troops, under the command of Colonel Justo Milla, took possession of Comayagua, the capital of Honduras, and imprisoned the governor of the state, Dionisio Herrera, who a short time before had refused to acknowledge the federal authorities and had endeavoured to separate Honduras from the rest of the republic. Most of the government officers and members of the state congress, having entered into his views, were displaced by order of the president of the republic, and new deputies and government officers were elected. The new authorities, however, only maintained their post during the presence of the federal troops, upon whose withdrawal they lost all control, and were driven out by a fresh insurrection.

On the 18th of May, General Arzee, the president

of the republic, at the head of about two thousand troops attacked the city of San Salvador (the state government of which had a short time ago declared itself separated from his authority); but after five hours' fighting, he was repulsed with the loss of two hundred men, and in consequence obliged to abandon the state of San Salvador. On the 28th of September, however, the federal troops, commanded by Colonel Millar, defeated the united forces of San Salvador and Honduras at Sabana Grande; but the federal troops were again in their turn defeated by a body of San Salvador and Nicaragua troops, commanded by Lieut. Col. Rernigio Dias, the victory being principally owing to the conduct of Francisco Morazan, a native of Honduras, who then first figured in the politics of Central America. Having been secretary-general of that state in 1824, he afterwards turned his attention to military matters, and rose to be first president or chief of Honduras, and afterwards of the republic. A brief notice of this chief, who is the only person of talent or ability to light up the dreary career of anarchy and misrule which forms the history of Central America, may perhaps be acceptable.

Francisco Morazan was born in the state of Honduras, in or about the year 1799, his father being, it would appear, a native of one of the French West India Islands, and his mother, of the country. His education was such as might have been expected in a country so backward in all sorts of knowledge, consisting merely of reading and writing; but he early evinced great quickness in acquiring knowledge, and was distinguished for his violent and fiery temper so

different from the apathy of disposition common among the natives of Spanish America.

His figure was good, and his features handsome and intelligent, his ruddy complexion and bright blue eye proving that his blood was different from that of his mongrel Spanish countrymen. His address was frank and independent, and quite free from the mixture of pride and ignorance, fawning and insolence, so universal in the natives of Spanish America who have attained a little brief authority. He had acquired a knowledge of the French language after leaving school, and from reading French books and history, combined with his descent, he had imbibed a great partiality for that nation, and it would appear a prejudice against the British; which was not a little increased by disputes he afterwards had with H. B. M. consul-general, Mr. Chatfield, who was generally considered as unfavourable to the liberal party of which General Morazan was the head. His private character was good for a Central American, and would be tolerable in most countries, Great Britain and North America excepted.

It would appear that, aware of his great superiority over the natives, he was at last led utterly to despise them, considering that every thing must at once yield to his talents and valour, and that his very appearance would insure victory, however inferior his forces might be; in this he was confirmed, by the facility with which he overthrew the party in power at the commencement of his career.

Morazan would have been quite unfitted to be the head of any country possessing men of real ability and understanding; his talents being better adapted

for undertaking and carrying out a dangerous enterprise, than maintaining his acquired authority, or securing the wise and peaceful government of the country.

On the 17th of December, a sanguinary engagement took place in the city of Santa Ana, in the state of San Salvador, between the troops of that state, commanded by Coronel Merino, and those of Guatemala by Brigadier Cascaras, which, after the loss of about three hundred men on both sides, was terminated by a convention, according to which both generals were to retire with their forces. Cascaras retired in accordance with the convention; but Merino, notwithstanding it, kept possession of Santa Ana.

During the year 1828 the disputes between the different states continued, leaving the republic in a complete state of anarchy. On the 9th of February, the officers commanding the troops under General William Perks excited an insurrection against their commander, who in consequence was forced to resign his command, and was succeeded by Colonel Antonio José Irzarri. In the same month the president of the republic, General Arzee, having deposited his command for a short time in the hands of the vice-president, Beltranena, the latter refused to relinquish his authority when required, and continued governor of the state and nominal president of the republic till he was expelled by General Morazan. General Aice, although a man of a mild and pacific temper, was never able to recover his authority, having no natural talent, and being of too gentle a temper for managing the violent elements that agitated his

country. Had a man of more determined character in the first place attained the supreme power in the republic, he might in the beginning have destroyed the seeds of insurrection, and procured a different destiny for the people.

On the 1st of March of this year the forces of Guatemala, commanded by Brigadier Arza, defeated the forces of San Salvador under Coronel Merino; the battle was extremely obstinate, and no quarter was given by either party, so that upwards of 600 fell, the greater number of whom were killed after the battle, during a general massacre which took place from the barbarous determination of taking no prisoners, but putting to death all who fell into their hands — a practice too often followed, which has given a most savage character to the wars in Central America, and has caused the exhibition of cruelties almost unheard of in the nineteenth century. After the engagement the victors laid siege to the city of San Salvador; but after great loss on both sides the besiegers retired, their leader being wounded by the bursting of a cannon; but the troops of San Salvador being again defeated by a force of Guatemala soldiers, commanded by Colonel Dominguez, who afterwards entirely reduced the department of San Miguel, the state of San Salvador was compelled again to submit to the federal government, and the union of a national congress in Santa Ana; the city of San Salvador to be in the mean time occupied by the federal troops. But the mob of San Salvador, on hearing of this convention, rose against the government; and having removed the pacific members, the civil war was resumed with

renewed hatred and fury; and the federal troops occupying the city were, on the 20th of September, taken prisoners, with their leaders.

On the 6th of July the forces of Honduras, for the first time, commanded by General Morazan, attacked, and after an obstinate engagement defeated the Guatemala forces, under the command of Colonel Dominguez, who had previously subdued the department of San Miguel. The engagement took place on the border of the river Lempa, and the retreat of the federal troops having been cut off, they retired to San Antonio; where, being again attacked by General Morazan, they laid down their arms; so that the authority of the federal government was entirely destroyed in the state of San Salvador, and might be considered as suspended in all the republic, till General Morazan again re-established it in his own person.

The state of Guatemala had sustained nearly all the brunt of the war against San Salvador and Honduras; and finding that its troops were in all parts defeated, it endeavoured, but in vain, to negotiate a peace, removing all the authors of the war who had any share in the government, and replacing them with men understood to be friendly to peace.

In Quesaltenango a conspiracy was formed against the existing government of Guatemala; the troops were attacked in their barracks, and killed or taken prisoners. Among the latter was the governor; but the mass of the people rose against the insurgents, and killed or dispersed them all, restoring the governor to his authority.

The end of this year was marked by the expiring efforts of the servile party in Guatemala, passing

laws against religious dissent, and for the burning of all prohibited books, or those not authorised by the Church of Rome. These laws, however, were abrogated the following year upon the destruction of the government and party which enacted them; but were again put in force in 1841 by the servile party, and are still in force in the state of Guatemala, though not in the other states which formed the republic. Still the existence of such laws cannot be of much importance till the general diffusion of education shall excite a desire of reading; and as soon as this takes place they will doubtless be repealed, or become a dead letter.

The year 1829 was principally distinguished by the rise and consolidation of Morazan's power.

On the 22nd of January an insurrection took place in Old Guatemala; the authorities of the state were expelled, and although the insurgents were easily subdued, and the authority of the government re-established in a few days, it encouraged General Morazan to invade the state at the head of 2000 Honduras and San Salvador troops. The first attack on the city of Guatemala was made on the 5th of February, when Morazan was repulsed with a trifling loss; he then proceeded to Old Guatemala, where he was received with open arms, the authorities of government making their escape without attempting any resistance; but having again advanced to Mizco, a town distant three leagues from Guatemala, he was a second time repulsed by the government forces, with the loss of about 150 men; the victors, however, pursuing their advantage too eagerly, were some days afterwards attacked by the General, and defeated

in their turn; and, on the 15th of March, he gained another victory, killing about a hundred of the government troops. The authorities of Guatemala now in vain attempted to negotiate a treaty with Morazan, offering to recal all the liberal party who had been exiled, and even to share the government with them; after two months of continued skirmishing, generally to the disadvantage of the government troops, the city of Guatemala was attacked on the 12th of April, and the greater part carried at the point of the bayonet. The remains of the government forces agreed to evacuate the city upon a capitulation, the principal points of which were that the city should be saved from plunder or violence, and that a new representative assembly should be called to settle the government, the former authorities remaining in power till new ones were elected; but General Morazan immediately afterwards asserting that the officers of government were intriguing against him, entered the city with his troops, imprisoned or drove out all the existing authorities, and ordered the re-establishment of the government officers deposed in Quesaltenango in October 1826. All the chiefs of the liberal party having assembled, and the deputies of the Congress deposed at Quesaltenango, Nicholas Espinosa, being president, decreed extraordinary honours to General Morazan, striking a gold medal to commemorate his success, and ordering his portrait to be hung in the hall of Congress. The federal congress and senate, dissolved in 1826, again assembled; and having declared all the laws enacted, and all proceedings adopted during their absence as illegal, and the government,

from the 6th of April 1826 to the 12th of April 1829, to have been an unconstitutional usurpation, the senior senator, José Francisco Barrundia, received the name of president by a decree of the Congress, though all the power was really in the hands of the victorious soldier, who had in so short a time exalted his party. On the 10th of July the archbishop of Guatemala, Raman Casaus (who had been discovered carrying on intrigues against the new government) was, by Morazan's order, seized at midnight by a party of soldiers, hurried to the port of Isabel, and put on board a vessel; the monks and friars of the three principal convents were also expelled from the state in a summary manner; and the Congress of Guatemala in the same month decreed the suppression of all the male convents, and prohibited females from becoming nuns for the future; appropriating to the government the revenues of the suppressed monasteries. This act was fully approved by the federal congress on the 7th of September following, which declared all religious orders at an end throughout the republic; it received also the universal sanction of the people, and was immediately carried into effect in all the states.

On the 22nd of August the federal congress passed an act, banishing the late president, vice-president, and ministers of the republic, and also the late governor of Guatemala and his ministers, and all the other officers last employed in the federal and state government; further ordering that they should return the amount they had received on account of their salaries, and that the third part of their property should be confiscated to pay the damages and expense

of the war. This appeared but a just retribution for the severities exercised by the servile party during their domination; but as most people belonged to one or other of these parties, the property of nearly all the principal people has been successively confiscated to enrich adventurers of the opposite party.

On the 1st of April of this year, the legislature of Costa Rica declared that state independent, and separated from the rest of the republic; and proceeded to enact different laws and duties which continued in force till January 1831, when the decree was annulled and the federal authorities again peaceably acknowledged. The great difference between this and most of the revolutions which have taken place in the other states of Central America, is that it was effected without any loss of life or property and as peaceably as any government could be changed in the best regulated European state.

During the same year, the state government of Honduras passed a decree that no regulation made by the pope in regard to religion could be carried into effect without the consent of the government; this law, which has also at different times been adopted in all the states, has been most violently resisted by the priests, and has been abrogated and revived according to the faction which obtained the lead in the government. The congress of Costa Rica abrogated the usury laws in that state, which had prohibited the exacting of above six per cent. on money. This permission has again been most foolishly recalled, and though the interest actually paid on the very best security is from one to two per cent per month, laws at present exist in all the states prohibiting the charge of above six per cent per annum. These laws are, however, as in all countries,

easily evaded and only serve to encumber fair business transactions. The state of Honduras this year also attempted to put on a property tax, but it met with such universal resistance that it could not be collected; the same result was afterwards experienced in the states of San Salvador and Guatemala, people who would not attempt to resist a forced contribution of some thousand dollars, refusing to pay a legally imposed tax of four or five. This appears to be part of the national character of all the Spanish descendants, who will, without a murmur submit to be robbed by an insurgent government, but will take every means to avoid the payment of the most necessary duties and taxes, however fairly and moderately levied.

About the end of this year some insurrections took place in Honduras, but these being quelled by the interference of General Morazan, and the government settled, the whole of the states were in a state of entire tranquillity, during this, and nearly all the succeeding year, 1830 and 1831, being the longest period of entire quiet which has been enjoyed by Central America. The state of Costa Rica remained separated from the rest during 1830, being reunited to the federal government in the beginning of 1831; but under the peaceable administration of Juan Mora, this state had wonderfully increased in wealth and prosperity, its retired position enabling the government to avoid meddling in the disputes which in the interim had convulsed all the other states. Mora was elected in 1824, re-elected in 1829, and continued governor of the state to the end of 1832. In the month of June 1830, the British authorities of Belize took

possession of the island of Roatan, off the coast of Honduras, and always considered as having formed part of the Spanish captain-generalship of Guatemala, and afterwards of the republic of Central America; but upon a complaint being made by the federal government it was abandoned, the British government disallowing the act of the Belize superintendent. Still, it would appear that the island is claimed by the British, who have prevented the republic from colonising it though they have not themselves taken formal possession.

In February 1831 the federal congress, upon the suggestion of Captain Chitty of the French ship of war Diana, passed a decree authorising the negotiation of a treaty of commerce with the French government, which treaty was signed in Paris in the month of June 1832; but some of the articles not being approved by the federal senate they declined to ratify it, and nothing was finally agreed on, so that Central America has never negotiated any treaty except with the United States of North America, and as this expired some years ago, it has at present no treaty with any foreign power.

In June 1830, the assembly of Guatemala declared the archbishop of that state a traitor, confiscating his property and banishing him for ever from the state; this decree was reversed on the return of the servile party to power in 1839, but the archbishop, who in the interim had taken up his abode in the Island of Cuba, refused to return and remained till his death, in 1845, when his bones were sent to Guatemala for interment.

The federal congress also decreed that the appoint-

ment of church dignities pertained to the nation and should be made by the president of the republic; and also prohibited the sale of papal bulls of all descriptions, without the previous consent of the executive government. This last decree has been a severe blow to the papal dominion in Central America, as although the government of some of the states has since done away with the prohibition, the people in the meantime had learnt to do without them, so that they failed in re-establishing the traffic.

In May 1830, the legislature of Honduras passed a law, permitting the marriage of secular priests; this liberal enactment, which was, it is said, brought forward by the express desire of the deputy bishop of the state, was shortly afterwards abrogated; but about the same time a law was passed declaring that the illegitimate children of all priests should succeed to their father's property in the same manner as if they were legitimate,— a law which is still in force. By the laws of Spain, adopted by Central America, the whole of a man's property must be equally divided among his family, and he can leave nothing to any other person provided he has legitimate children; thus it would appear, that concubinage is legally authorised to the clergy, though marriage is prohibited.

The years 1830 and 1831, were noted by the establishment of a school in Guatemala, on the Lancasterian principle; and universities, supported by government, in San Salvador and Leon.

During the civil wars, bands of robbers had sprung up in different parts of the country, which were attacked and exterminated by General Morazan's government. Agriculture and commerce began to

revive; the cultivation of indigo in the state of San Salvador, which had greatly fallen off, again reached 7000 bales annual produce, while the cultivation of cochineal had been successfully introduced in the state of Guatemala, and that of coffee in Costa Rica.

In the month of November 1831, Ramon Guzman, governor of the castle of Omoa, being recalled, refused to resign his command and endeavoured to excite an insurrection against the federal government, but finding no adherents he hoisted the Spanish flag and solicited assistance from Cuba; and failing in his application, he was at the end of five months delivered up to the federal general, Colonel Agustin Guzman, by his troops, the Spanish flag being dragged through the streets of Omoa tied to a horse's tail.

At the commencement of 1832, all the elements of discord, which had slumbered for two years, seemed to break out with fresh vigour. The legislative assembly of San Salvador on the 7th of January, declared the federal compact at an end and refused to acknowledge the authorities of the republic. The president of the republic, who, with his ministers, was proceeding to San Salvador to investigate the alleged grievances of that state, having reached Santa Ana on his journey, was compelled to return to Guatemala. But General Morazan, having collected forces in Honduras and Nicaragua, defeated the San Salvador forces near San Miguel on the 14th of March, and marching onward without further resistance laid seige to the city of San Salvador on the 26th of the same month; and having after two days'

resistance taken the city, put all the officers of the existing government in prison, afterwards sending them with a guard of troops to Guatemala for trial. He then declared himself president of the state of San Salvador as well as of the republic; and having chosen a new government from among his own adherents, all the acts of the late government were declared illegal, and its members were ordered to refund all the money they had received on account of their salaries from the public treasury, and to forfeit all claims they might have against the government.

On the 24th of October the new authorities of San Salvador, having in order to maintain the government decreed a property tax, the people resisted its collection in every part, and the government were not only forced to abandon the collection but to leave the capital and proceed to the town of San Vicente. Perceiving that the rage of the people was not calmed, the governor, Mariano Prado, resigned. San Miguel was afterwards taken by Colonel Benites, and several of the insurgents were capitally punished; but the government of Central America have always found it impossible to enforce direct taxation, which the ignorant people consider as unjustifiable robbery; hence when the duties on imports fall short, their only resource is to exact a forced contribution from the merchants and others who have got a little ready capital. This destructive alternative has gradually ruined the industry and enterprise of all parties; and the first step towards the commencement of a better system must be the enforcement of reasonable taxes, collected if neces-

sary under military protection, by which alone the ruinous system can be avoided.

On the 3rd of December, 1832, the representative assembly of Nicaragua declared that state separated from the rest, until certain alterations which they proposed were made in the federal constitution, and proceeded to take possession of the customs' duties and apply them to the purposes of the state government. The state of San Salvador adopted the same measures in the month of February following; Honduras in the month of May; and Costa Rica in the month of September, leaving the federal government only the duties collected in Guatemala. The discontented states having proposed the calling of a new federal congress, the federal government accordingly issued writs for that purpose, on the 20th of April 1833; but as the smaller states insisted on sending an equal number of representations as Guatemala (which possessed a population nearly equal to all the rest jointly), and refused to elect representatives on any other principle, no elections took place under this summons; and although Guatemala afterwards even agreed to the principle of an equal representation, and part of the states elected deputies for the new Congress, subsequent events prevented it from ever assembling, and the old Congress continued the only representative body of the federation. A faction, calling itself the Reform Association, in the town of Managua in Nicaragua, declared itself separated from the existing government of the state, and refused to acknowledge the acting president, Dionisio Herrera. Masaga and Matagalpa took part with the insurgents, and Leon and Granada with the govern-

ment; and after a number of skirmishes attended with a considerable loss of life, and an entire state of anarchy in all parts of the country, the government party obtained the advantage, and captured Managua on the 29th of June, the insurgents being killed or dispersed. This insurrection appears to have been excited by agents of Spain, as a number of prints were discovered in Managua, bearing on one side the likeness of Ferdinand VII., and on the other a priest in the attitude of preaching, with the words "God save Ferdinand VII., king of Spain and the Indies."

On the 24th of July of this year, Anastasia Aquino, an Indian native of the aboriginal town of Santiago Nunualco, having formed a conspiracy for the destruction of the white and coloured population, and the establishment of a native government in the state of San Salvador, collected a large body of Indians and proceeded to attack the neighbouring towns, putting to death the whites and mestizoes; but being defeated by the government troops in an attack upon San Vicente, he and all his followers were captured and immediately put to death, and orders given to hunt down the Indians in every part. Very few however were put to death, beyond those who had taken an active part in the insurrection.

On the second of May, 1832, the federal congress passed an act of entire religious freedom throughout the republic, permitting the inhabitants to profess any religion they might choose, and to preach it privately and publicly; this law was approved and passed by all the state legislators, but it would appear to have been far too liberal, considering the state of the country and the ignorance and bigotry

of the lower orders, who being entirely guided by the Roman Catholic priests, were taught by them to believe that every thing done to weaken the authority of the Church of Rome was a sacrilegious outrage. From the small number of strangers in Central America this law was also quite unimportant, for, if all the protestants in the republic were united they would not amount to half a hundred. The law has since been abrogated in all the states, except San Salvador, the religious worship of persons dissenting from the Church of Rome being limited to their own houses. On the 15th of July, the legislature of the state of Guatemala decreed the entire abolition of tithes, which had previously been reduced to one half; this law was abrogated in 1839, and again enforced; a measure which took place in all the states according to the nature of the party in power. At present the impost nominally exists in all the states, except San Salvador; but the resistance to all direct taxation nearly prevents the collection of this, as it has done of all other imposts, so that it produces next to nothing, and the priests have to subsist almost entirely from the fees of marriages, baptisms, burials, masses, &c., and voluntary contributions exacted from the lower orders.

In the month of August, the state of San Salvador established trial by jury in all cases, and their example was followed by Nicaragua, and Guatemala in 1835; but this law, like many others, proved too liberal for so backward a state of society; and instead of producing any benefit, has caused continual opposition and disturbances, and has gradually been disused, and finally legally abolished.

In August 1832, the federal congress adopted the

singular resolution of a general mourning for the death of Jeremy Bentham, the act being, as it would appear, copied from that of the French Chamber of Deputies with reference to Benjamin Franklin.

On the 5th of Frebruary, 1834, the federal congress removed its sitting to Sonsonate, in the state of San Salvador, in accordance with a restriction which had been passed by that body in the preceding June; and in the succeeding June again removed to the city of San Salvador, which then became the capital of the republic. This arrangement seemed in every respect a proper one, as the situation of San Salvador is nearly central, while that of Guatemala is far removed from the greater part of the states; still the act would really appear to have been ill advised, as from Guatemala being the largest and richest city, its concurrence was of most importance, and the dissatisfaction at seeing the importance of their city reduced by the removal of the government has in a great measure caused the revolt of that state, and finally the dissolution of the federal government.

In the month of February, 1835, the city of San Salvador, and the surrounding district for ten leagues, was erected into a federal department, and continued to be the nominal capital of the republic, till it was again resumed by the state government on the dissolution of the federation.

This, like many of the national acts, was manifestly copied from the United States of North America without taking into account the very different circumstances of the two countries. On the 13th of February, 1835, the federal congress decreed a new constitution for the republic upon the basis of that of 1824, but

it was universally disapproved, and rejected by all the states except Costa Rica, from not containing the alterations and reforms which they had desired.

In May, 1834, the towns of Granada and Metapa, in Nicaragua, rebelled against the government of that state, at the instigation of Colonel Candio Flores who aspired to the chief command. The insurgents at first obtained some advantages, defeating some government troops sent against them, and took possession of the town of Managua; but on the 13th of August, being defeated and driven out by the government troops, Granada was invested and taken after three days siege; and four of the leaders of the insurrection were publicly executed, and the remainder dispersed.

On the 23rd of June of the same year, the state government of San Salvador having passed a number of laws disapproved by the federal government, prepared again to assert its independence by force; a sanguinary engagement took place between the troops of the state, commanded by Colonel José Dolore Castillo, and the federal troops of the garrison, commanded by General Salazar, and after an engagement of five hours' duration, and the loss of about three hundred men, victory declared in favour of the federal troops.

The success of the federal party was followed up by the proscription of the San Salvador government, which was afterwards administered by the vice-president of the republic, and the state congress dissolved. It is certainly a remarkable trait in the Central American character, that the two governments, appointed by General Morazan within two

years time, both opposed his measures and finally took up arms against the supreme government of which he was the head. To this they were apparently forced by the strong dislike shown by the people of the state to his government; yet, we shall shortly see the same people supporting him against all the rest of the republic.

The month of September, 1835, exhibited the rare occurrence of an insurrection in the peaceable little state of Costa Rica, which had all along so happily continued exempt from the disturbances which distracted all the other states of Central America. This insurrection was supposed to have been excited by the priests who were enraged at the adoption, by the legislature, of a law suppressing tithes in imitation of similar acts passed by all the other states.

The municipality of Cartago, the old capital of the state, having declared itself separated from the state government invited the other towns to join it and assemble a new congress, to be popularly elected by universal suffrage, whereas by the laws of Costa Rica, electors must possess lands worth one hundred dollars. The towns of Heridia and Alhajuela took part with the insurgents, and having assembled an armed force of about two thousand men, marched to attack the government in the city of San José; but being defeated in two engagements by the party which adhered to government, the insurgent towns had to surrender at discretion, the most active parties in the revolt having made their escape.

The proceedings of the federal and state congresses in 1834 and 1835, are of little importance; the states of Guatemala and Costa Rica suppressed

all the holidays of the Roman Catholic Church, except Sundays, and five other days in the year. This measure, however, could never be carried into effect owing to the bigotry of the lower classes, who at the instigation of the priests denounced the act of the legislature as an impious attempt to profane the holy festivals of the Church. Hence it had no result beyond making the government hated by the lower orders, and precipitating the fall of the liberal party; and though the law is still in existence, the endless festivals of the Romish calendar are, as before, universally celebrated by idleness and every sort of debauchery. It is too evident that, until the people are better instructed, the enactment of more liberal laws is not only useless, but gives demagogues an opportunity of exciting the brutal feelings of the mob for their own selfish purposes.

The year 1836 forms one of the very few periods of repose in all parts of the republic, but, unfortunately, as no progress was made towards the final establishment of a settled government, it can only be compared to one of the intervals between the eruptions of one of the active volcanoes, which form so apt an emblem of the people in the country where they are situated. The year was signalised by the establishment of a British settlement by a company got up in England; the situation chosen for the establishment was the Boca Nueva, in the department of Vera Paz, state of Guatemala. The projected town was to be called Abbotsville. The first emigrants arrived in July of this year, and altogether about a thousand individuals went thither

for the purpose of settling. But the climate, as might have been expected from its being the coast of a tropical country covered with rank vegetation, proved very fatal to the new settlers; and the affairs of the company, being conducted by men quite ignorant of the country, were mismanaged. Hence it declined rapidly, and in two years' time was entirely abandoned to the ruin of the shareholders in the company, and the emigrants who had been induced to settle in so ill-selected a situation. Some few of them still remain in other parts of Central America, but the majority of the survivors either returned to England or went to the West Indies or United States. It seems a most singular infatuation in Europeans to attempt colonising on pestiferous shores under a burning sun, where no native of a temperate region, not even those of the interior of the same country, can enjoy tolerable health. Had they, instead, secured lands on the delightful banks of the Lake of Nicaragua, or on the table lands of Guatemala or Costa Rica, with a communication to the nearest port, the result might have been very different; but the failure of most colonies lately founded, no doubt arose from their being undertaken by people strangers to the country and the climate where they were to be established; and it is to be hoped, that if such schemes are again undertaken, persons acquainted with the country will previously be consulted.

The commencement of the year 1836 was marked by a recurrence of the often repeated distractions in the state of Nicaragua. A part of the garrison of Leon, commanded by Branlio Mondiolo, rose against

the government and murdered the governor, Colonel José Zepeda; but the vice-governor, José Nunez, having collected a body of troops defeated the insurgents, and having taken their leader prisoner put him immediately to death.

On the first day of the year, the Livingstone code of laws, which had been adopted by the state legislature in 1834, was put in execution, and the new court for trial by jury was formally opened in Guatemala on the 23rd of January, and successively in the other ten districts of the state.

This system had the same unfortunate result as all the laws prematurely copied from more enlightened states, and formed one of the principal causes of the disasters and revolution in Guatemala, and of the ruin of the federal government; and so great was the discontent of the people, and the clamour raised against it, that in the succeeding year it was found necessary to suspend the law; nor has it since been revived; the only part of the code still in force being the law "of habeas corpus," though this also has become a dead letter in most cases. This code of laws was, also, in the same year adopted by the federal congress, but caused more or less discontent in all the states and was soon discontinued and the old Spanish law reverted to.

On the 6th of March, a serious disturbance took place in the town of San Juan Ostuncala, the people, who were nearly all aborigines, being provoked at being compelled to work at the construction of prisons, and excited against the new laws, rose *en masse*, to attack the circuit judges, at that time holding their first court of justice in the town. They

and the officers accompanying them were compelled to save themselves from the popular indignation by a precipitate flight. The magistrate of the district, escorted by a troop of dragoons, proceeded to remonstrate with the Indians; but he had no sooner begun to speak than they directed against him a shower of stones. An engagement then took place between the mob and the dragoons, when the former was dispersed with considerable loss after killing twenty-four of the dragoons. The Indians left behind them an idol and a jar filled with stones collected from the bed of a neighbouring river. It appears that they had been made to believe that the jar, if broken at the moment of the attack, would throw lightning upon the enemy, and, by enchantment, a number of venomous snakes were to rush out from a neighbouring wood and bite the soldiers; — an event which was to be brought about by the assistance of the old gods of the country, which, though nominally discarded by the Indians, are always recurred to in times of necessity, as the Romish superstition is by those in Europe professing a purer creed. The idol was a monstrous figure of a man seated cross-legged, with the head reclining upon the back, and the arms, encompassing an enormous belly, hanging down from the throat, being doubtless one of the old idols which had been concealed from the careful search of the inquisition. The figure is still preserved in Guatemala.

On the 19th of April, the first case of cholera morbus made its appearance in Guatemala; and a little sooner or later it found its way into all parts of the republic successively, being particularly fatal in Amatitlan and some other towns,

where most of the houses were deserted, and all industry at an end for two months; but it gradually disappeared every where, towards the end of the year.

The 9th of June of the same year was also fatally remarkable for the commencement of an insurrection among the lower orders, which eventually overturned the existing government and destroyed the federation. The people having been excited against the new law of trial by jury by the priests and other ill-disposed persons, and persuaded that the cholera was caused by the poisoning of all the rivers and springs by the government agents, in several instances murdered the doctors who were sent by the authorities to visit the towns where the cholera was prevalent, and began to collect in bodies, under different chiefs inimical to regular government or hoping to exalt themselves in a general anarchy. Of these meetings the largest and most formidable was held on the 9th of June, in the town of Santa Rosa, in the district of Mita. It attracted the especial notice of government, which deemed it necessary no longer to defer the measures for suppressing the insurrection: and accordingly, the magistrate of the district was despatched with an escort of forty dragoons and a strong body of infantry, with instructions to attempt in the first instance to dissolve the assembly quietly, but if unable to do so, to make use of force. That functionary having incautiously advanced with the dragoons, without waiting for the rest of the force, no sooner began to practise the legal formalities for dispersing the mob, than they broke out with cries

of execration against juries and poisoners, and attacking the troop of dragoons, killed a part and put the rest to flight. The principal leader of the mob on this occasion was Rafael Carrera, who afterwards had so fatal an influence on the destiny of the republic. At this time he was about one and twenty years of age, a dark-coloured and extremely ill-looking mestizo. It appears that, when a boy, he had been servant to a woman in Amatitlan of the name of Hertuides Dias, and afterwards had been occupied in driving pigs for sale from the country to Guatemala and other large towns; and, having by his talent acquired considerable influence among the aboriginal natives in the district of Mita, he used it to excite them against the government, circulating among these ignorant beings the story that the cholera morbus was caused by the poisoning of the waters. He and his followers, however, disappeared on the sight of a strong body of troops, but though often defeated, he has always contrived to re-assemble his followers in greater force. He is undoubtedly a man of great natural talent, but of a violent temper, excessively ignorant, and, consequently, led principally by designing ill-principled persons. Though supported, and finally induced to enter Guatemala by the servile party (at the head of whom are the self-called nobles and old Spaniards), in the hope that he would serve as their instrument, he has proved too cunning for them, and instead of being (as they intended) removed when he had suited their purpose, he has kicked away the ladder by which he mounted to power; and having possessed himself of absolute authority, has

the good sense to employ liberal ministers in the government.

On the 15th of June, a strong body of government troops attacked and dispersed the insurgents of Mita, in the vicinity of the town of Matequesquintla, making a great slaughter of the Indians; and afterwards entered and plundered the town, treating the inhabitants with such cruelty that they were driven to desperation, and every subsequent attempt at reconciliation rendered impossible. The Indians showed a desperate courage, and readily sacrificed their lives, urged on as they were by the priests, who promised heaven to all who were killed in the war; so that though often dispersed they continued to re-assemble, and like bees attacked their supposed oppressors, who were tired out by the impossibility of following them and the interminable nature of the insurrection.

The new legislative body of Guatemala met in extraordinary session on the 16th of June, when acrimonious disputes passed between the ministerial and opposition parties. The president, in order to attempt a pacification, appointed as new ministers, Juan Jose Acynena, and Manuel Zebadua, who were supposed to be neutral, or if any thing, favourable to the servile interest; but as they were men of no talent, they entirely failed in effecting a reconciliation, and were soon dismissed with the hatred and contempt of both parties, the political horizon daily wearing a more threatening aspect.

This year a treaty was also made with the independent tribe of Indians, called Menche, inhabiting the N. E. part of the state of Guatemala, by which

they agreed to place themselves under the protection of the republic of Central America. They were to be allowed six years before being subjected to the laws of the republic, and no alteration was to be made in their religion or in the law permitting plurality of wives; yet this treaty has continued entirely a dead letter, and the states of Central America have found too much employment in their own affairs to permit their interfering with the Indians, who continue to live in their own way.

In the commencement of 1838, strong symptoms of disaffection to the state government having shown themselves in several of the departments of Guatemala, the government declared those of Sacatepequez and Guatemala in a state of rebellion, and proclaimed martial law. The same disturbances continued throughout the year without intermission.

On the 18th of January, the city of Old Guatemala, capital of the department of Sacatepequez, separated itself from the state, and invested with supreme power a provisional government, which placed itself directly under the protection of the federal government, and declared that of Guatemala in a state of insurrection.

This example was followed by the department of Chiquimula on the 25th of the month, and five days afterwards by the departments of Salamar and Vera Paz, thus leaving the whole state in complete anarchy.

On the 26th of January, one of the battalions of the troops in Guatemala rose against the government, demanding the re-establishment of the ministers dismissed on the 13th of November preceding, and of

Don Mariano Galvez, the governor, whose resignation had been forced by the opposition party. This insurrection hastened the attack of the different insurgents upon the capital. On the 30th of the same month, the troops of Old Guatemala and the insurgents of Mita laid siege to Guatemala; and after four days defence, the small garrison was forced to retire, and the city submitted to the authority of Don Pedro Velasquez, who took upon himself the government in place of Mariano Galvez, who had administered it for two years with great moderation. The people of Guatemala in this, as in most other disputes, showed the most perfect apathy with regard to the result, and neither attempted to defend the government of their selection, nor dispute the will of the victors.

On the 2nd of February, the departments of the Altos, apparently disgusted with the weakness and insecurity of the Guatemala government, separated themselves for the purpose of forming a sixth independent state in the federation of Central America, and established a provisional government, composed of Messrs. Marcelo Malino, Jose M. Galvez, and Jose A. Aguilar. On the 5th of June following, the new state was recognised by the federal congress, and the provinces of Quesaltenango, Tonanecapan, and Solala were declared for ever separated from Guatemala; but this new state had a very ephemeral existence, being re-incorporated with Guatemala about a year afterwards. The opposition party, being now triumphant in Guatemala, made an entire change in the government, and behaved most violently towards the other parties, thus opening

the passage to another faction, which was soon to overwhelm them all, and to treat the ignorant quacks pretending to administer the government as they deserved, but at the same time to sweep away the last vestige of liberty.

On the 30th of March, General Morazan, the president of the republic, opened the first campaign against the insurgents of Mita, repulsing them in the valley of Mataquesquintla; but after three months of continued marches, counter-marches, and skirmishes, the president, though victorious in every engagement, found the enemy increase instead of diminishing, and the cunning of Carrera seemed to be more than a match for the bravery of General Morazan, who was forced to return to Guatemala without having made any real progress in the subjugation of the insurgents. A second campaign, undertaken in the month of November, was brought to a close by treaties made at the end of the year. The people and government of Guatemala finally alarmed at the progress made by the insurgents, and the government seeing that it had lost its credit with all parties, it was determined that all the authorities of the state should resign their offices into the hands of the president of the republic, and that during his absence the chief authority should be vested in the commander-in-chief of the army, associated with two other officers, while the election of a new house of representatives was taking place, which should have competent authority to re-organise the government. The vice-president, Valenzuela, being made aware of this determination, resigned on the 23rd

of July, and Mariano Rivera Paz, as president of the council, entered upon the office of chief magistrate. The people, who had assembled in a tumultuous manner to act against the government, were no sooner aware of this arrangement and the promise to call a new representative assembly, than they at once dispersed, and public tranquillity was thus restored for a brief period.

The new government immediately reversed all the former decrees of proscription, pardoning all anterior acts, and decreeing a general oblivion of all that had occurred from the 15th of September, 1821, to that period.

In the month of August, General Morazan, having been forced to proceed to San Salvador, for the purpose of quelling a revolt got up by Francisco Malespein and other demagogues, the insurgents of Mita, commanded by Rafael Carrera, attacked and defeated the federal troops, under the command of Colonel Bonilla, in the plains of Xalapa; and so complete was the overthrow, that he could only save a small part of his force by retiring into the state of San Salvador. After this success, the insurgents increased in numbers and confidence, and advanced towards the capital of Guatemala in such large force that there appeared no possibility of resisting them. Diverging, however, to the town of Patapa, they there again defeated the government troops, under Colonel Fonseca (who had only intended to reconnoitre the ground), but, by the forwardness of their leader, he was brought to an engagement, and pursuing their advantage, the insurgents made a rapid advance upon Old Guatemala, which they occupied the fol-

lowing day without resistance, exercising the greatest cruelties upon the inhabitants, and plundering a great part of the city: but on the 11th of September General Salazar, at the head of about nine hundred troops, encountered the insurgents in the town of Villa Nueva, returning from the plunder of Old Guatemala, and the country being covered with a dense fog, which is very common in this district (being merely a cloud resting on the table land), the government forces were enabled to form for the attack before the insurgents were aware of their presence, and thus suddenly attacked, they were easily defeated and slaughtered in great numbers by the victors, who pursued them into the houses in the town, and bayoneted them without mercy, leaving about five hundred of the Indians dead. The remainder, with their leader Carrera, fled in the greatest disorder; and had they been promptly pursued, it appears probable that the faction of Mita might have been entirely extinguished; but General Salazar, owing to disputes with the other commanders, was obliged to proceed to Guatemala, where he resigned his commission in disgust; and, though he was afterwards induced to resume the command, the insurgents in the interior again gained head, and the opportunity of crushing them was for ever lost.

On the 25th of October the Mita insurgents, who had again collected in force, made an incursion into the state of San Salvador, as far as the town of Santa Ana, which, together with Ahnachapan, and other towns on the road, was put under contribution

by them. Having with great celerity repassed the river Naz, which separates the states of San Salvador and Guatemala, they attacked Colonel Carballo, commanding a division of government troops at Chequimalilla, but were repulsed with the loss of about 150 men. During the succeeding month a number of skirmishes took place, without any decided result; but on the 23rd of December, a treaty was made between the insurgents and government, by which the former agreed to deliver up their arms and recognise the existing authorities of the state; the government pledging itself in return, to name their leader, Carrera, commander of the district of Mita, and not in any way to punish the late acts of the insurgents. This convention was ratified by the president of the republic immediately after, thus evidently showing the weakness of government, who were obliged to leave in Carrera's hands an official authority to keep up his troops, and the actual power of making himself more formidable than ever.

On the 30th of May of the same year, the federal congress passed an act enabling the government of each state to make such laws as it might deem proper, without the consent of the federal government, merely acknowledging its authority in external relations and the collection of custom-house duties. This liberty, which had in reality existed for some years previously, was one of the last steps towards the total dissolution of the federation, which took place soon after.

On the 20th of July, the twelfth and last session of the federal congress was closed, the president being Don Basilio Porras; shortly afterwards, the different

states proclaimed their independence, and they have since been unable to agree among themselves in the formation of a national government. In the month of October, the representative assembly of the state of Guatemala also dissolved itself.

The state legislature of Nicaragua assembled in the month of May (Pedro Solis being elected president), for the purpose of revising the constitution of that state; and in the succeeding month, declared the state of Nicaragua free and independent of the federation and all other governments till a new agreement should be made between the states forming the republic of Central America.

Costa Rica was also subjected to a change of government but, as usual, without bloodshed. Branlio Carrillo, the late chief of that state, having excited an insurrection against the legal governor, Manuel Aguilar, the latter was deposed and Carrillo vested with the supreme command. This chief, who seemed to be a man of considerable talent, though, as it would appear, destitute of personal courage, having compelled the representative assembly to proclaim the state independent and separate from the rest of Central America, established an absolute government, his will being the only law in every thing, and the lives and property of all the inhabitants entirely at his disposal, so that for four years this little state was submitted to a more absolute despotism than even exists in Russia or Turkey; still he encouraged all sorts of industry, made good roads and bridges, and, what is still more extraordinary in America, paid the principal and interest of the part of the foreign debt pertaining to the state of Costa Rica.

Being enabled by its retired situation to avoid all interference with the other governments, the state, during his administration, increased in an unparalleled degree in industry and wealth, and the people seemed to have acquired a taste for improvement which was afterwards continued. Thus the state which was once the poorest, became the richest province (for its population and extent) in Central America.

The second constituent assembly of the state of Honduras having met on the 7th of October, elected for president José Santiaga Buezo; and the municipality of the town of Tegucigalpa, having declared it separated from the rest of the states (until the government decreed its independence and resumed the custom-houses and duties of the state), removing the governor of the department, and placing itself, in the interim, under the protection of the Nicaragua government, the assembly was forced to decree the absolute independence of the state, which they did by a decree bearing date the 5th of November, thus leaving the federal authority entirely abrogated in three of the states forming the nominal republic. The states of San Salvador, Guatemala, and the new state of the Altos, still adhered to the federal government, which however could never regain its lost authority and was clearly hastening to its fall.

On the 18th of January, the states of Honduras and Nicaragua, having formed mutual treaties of alliance, proceeded to join their forces and invade San Salvador, then the only stronghold of the federal party.

On the 1st of February of the year 1839, General

Morazan concluded his second legal period as president of the republic, to which he was never again legally elected; and, though the semblance of a federal government was kept up some time longer in the state of San Salvador, the republic of Central America may properly be considered as dissolved from this date.

CHAP. VI.

HISTORY OF CENTRAL AMERICA FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 1ST FEBRUARY, 1839, TO DECEMBER, 1846.

In the month of March, 1839, the troops of Nicaragua, consisting of about two thousand men, entered the state of San Salvador, with the professed object of freeing that state from the dominion of General Morazan, who continued to call himself president of the republic, and to keep up the form of a federal government in the capital of San Salvador, the only state which still adhered to the federal government. On the 15th of March, the federal troops were defeated by those of Nicaragua at the river Lempa, and the victors marched forward and took possession of San Vicente without further resistance; but afterwards, proceeding onwards towards the capital of San Salvador, they were in their turn routed by the San Salvador troops commanded by Colonel Benitez, and driven back with some loss. The troops of Nicaragua, as usual, were a disorderly rout of half naked savages, and were received with terror by the more civilised inhabitants of San Salvador. Their career was everywhere marked by robbery, bloodshed, and unheard of cruelties, which will long be remembered in the state. Indeed, the crimes imputed

to these wretches would hardly be believed in a civilised country.

The defeated troops of Nicaragua, having retreated, were joined by a force of Honduras troops, commanded by General Francisco Ferrera, and again advanced without resistance to the river Lempa, where, on the 6th of April, they were met by the forces of San Salvador, commanded by General Morazan; and though the force of the latter was not half as large as that commanded by General Ferrera, they commenced the attack with great fury; and after an engagement of two hours' duration, the united forces of Honduras and Nicaragua were totally routed, with the loss of upwards of three hundred men, and forced to fly in the greatest disorder. This victory was principally owing to the personal valour of General Morazan, who charged the enemy with great fury and determination, and received a severe wound in the right arm. General Morazan being fully occupied in the state of San Salvador, deputed General Cabañas to pursue the enemy into Honduras; and this leader, following up the success, defeated the Honduras troops in several engagements, and on the 28th of August, entered and took possession of Comayagua, the capital of Honduras; but General Ferrera, having after his defeat collected another force of 2000 men in Honduras and Nicaragua, entered the state of San Salvador by another route (giving the slip to Gen. Cabañas), and penetrating to the village of Pedro Perulapan, with the intention of joining the discontented party in the city of San Salvador, was there met by General Morazan at the head of 600 troops; and notwithstanding their supe-

riority in point of numbers (more than three to one), the troops commanded by General Ferrera were repulsed and routed with great slaughter; and General Cabañas having again encountered and routed the Honduras troops, took the city of Tegucigalpa, the largest town in Honduras, and the only one in possession of any commerce and riches. This, however, appeared to be the last success of that brave and noble-minded general, who was in the month of January following attacked by a very superior force of Honduras and Nicaragua troops, under the command of Colonel Quijano, and compelled to retreat from the state. The fall of General Morazan and the federal party was now evidently hastening, and had only been deferred a little by the bravery and talent of that general.

On the 16th of September, 1839, the mob of San Salvador rose against Morazan's authority; but on his return to that city two days afterwards, the insurgents fled without striking a blow, — his mere personal appearance, with a very small force, being sufficient to frighten his enemies, who afterwards had recourse to treachery and intrigue, though then freely pardoned by Morazan, as it would appear, in contempt for their cowardice.

This year was noted for an entire revolution in Guatemala and the destruction of the liberal party, who had ruled since April 1829, and the final separation of that state from the federal government, which, indeed, only then nominally existed.

On the 21st of March, Rafael Carrera, now dignified with the name of general, at the head of about five thousand armed Indians, made a rapid incursion

upon the city of Guatemala, and the small garrison of 300 troops being unable to offer him any opposition, and the citizens refusing to arm in their defence, the city was taken without resistance. Carrera exacted such terms as he thought proper from the terrified inhabitants, — these were the deposition of all the existing authorities, the restitution of Mariano Rivera Paz (who had been removed, in course of law, by the new government at the commencement of the year) to the supreme command, and the payment of 20,000 dollars to him and his Indians; — demands which appeared extremely moderate, as Guatemala lay entirely at his mercy.

The new government declared all the acts of the former authorities illegal. Acting under Carrera's orders, who continued from this time to be the only real governor of the state, it proscribed and put to death all the opposite party who had not made their escape in time; and by a decree, dated the 17th of April, declared the federal compact dissolved, and the state of Guatemala a sovereign and independent government. This decree was ratified by an assembly, called a representative council, summoned by the new government, and consisting, of course, only of their partisans. The new government afterwards made treaties of alliance with most of the other states, stipulating for mutual privileges in trade, which were also agreed on between most of the other states; but in every other respect they were treated as foreign nations, though the empty name of the republic of Central America was still kept up. The new Guatemala government, being composed of the servile party, proceeded to abolish most of the

liberal laws enacted by the preceding governments, and re-established the legal tribunal of the consolado, the commission of protection of the Indians, some of the suppressed convents, and other institutions abolished by the liberal party; their apparent object being, as far as possible to revert to the state of the Spanish government, without, however, being able to restore the peace and security which it possessed. The priests strongly pressed for the re-imposition of tithes, the resumption of the church property, and shortly after, the independence; but though many were well-inclined to adopt these measures, Carrera prudently refused to create a power which would soon have overwhelmed him; and the small remnant of liberty nominally preserved to the state of Guatemala would appear more to be owing to the prudent moderation of General Carrera, than any efforts made by the people themselves.

The new governor took the title of president of the sovereign and independent state of Guatemala, —a title which was afterwards adopted in the states of Honduras and San Salvador; the government of Nicaragua adopting that of supreme director, and Costa Rica alone continuing the use of the ancient title, *Gefe* (chief or governor).

The legislature of the state of Nicaragua this year ordered the new code of laws passed in 1837 to be put in force in that state. This, and the code of laws used in San Salvador, are said to be much simpler and better arranged than the old Spanish code which is still used in the other states.

At the end of this year all the states of the nominal republic, except Costa Rica, presented the sad

appearance of anarchy and ruin ; all branches of industry being nearly at an end, the towns falling to ruin, the cultivation of the fields nearly abandoned, and the inhabitants in a sad state of wretchedness and demoralisation.

In the commencement of 1840, the Indians of the new state of the Altos, enraged at being obliged to pay larger taxes to the new government than they had paid to that of Spain or Guatemala, and being excited by the priests, whose power the new government had attempted to diminish, rose in insurrection in several places, being secretly encouraged by agents from Guatemala, the new administration of which hoped to re-annex the province; for which purpose General Carrera invaded it with a strong force ; and another of the Guatemala leaders, Major-General Monteroso, having, on the 20th of January, attacked and defeated the division of Altos troops commanded by Colonel Carzo (who was proceeding by the coast of the Pacific, to effect a junction with the troops invading Guatemala from San Salvador, under the command of General Morazan), their leader and many of the officers were murdered by the Indians in their attempt to retreat, these ignorant wretches exhibiting a degree of savage cruelty to the unfortunate officers of government who fell into their hands, before unheard of among the aborigines of Central America.

On the succeeding day the other division of the invaders, under General Carrera, defeated and dispersed the government troops guarding the pass of Solola, and entering Quesaltenango without further opposition, took prisoners the acting governor, Guz-

man, and all the authorities of government who had not made their escape. These unfortunate men were treated in the most brutal manner by Carrera and his Indians, many being put to death by slow torture. The ephemeral state of the Altos ceased from this time to exist, being re-incorporated with Guatemala.

General Morazan, having determined to make a final attempt to recover his lost authority and re-establish the federal government, invaded Guatemala in the commencement of March, at the head of twelve hundred San Salvador troops; and after several skirmishes, in which he had the advantage, took possession of Guatemala on the 18th of the month; but being there surrounded by 5000 troops, commanded by General Carrera, and abandoned in the most cowardly manner by the parties who had invited him to the city, he was forced, after a most desperate defence of twenty-two hours' duration, to retire, cutting his way through the enemy with about half the troops which had entered. The greater number of the remainder, being unable to make their escape, were massacred by Carrera's men without mercy, no quarter being given. A few of the officers took refuge in the British and French consulates; but a great part of the former, who were given up on the promise that they should have a legal trial, were immediately afterwards butchered in the streets. General Morazan managed his retreat in a manner which would have reflected credit on a European general with European troops, and repulsed all the forces sent to pursue him. But, upon the news of his defeat in Guatemala, all the factions in San Salvador united against him, and

seeing that further resistance was hopeless, he embarked on board the schooner Isalcho, from the port of Libertad, on the 5th of April, together with the late vice-president of the republic and thirty-five of his principal partisans and friends, and arrived safely in the port of Valparaiso, in Chili.

The defeat and banishment of Morazan was immediately followed by the invasion of the state of San Salvador by a large body of Indians, led by General Carrera (nominally in pursuit of General Morazan), who marked their career with robbery and desolation; but having removed all the authorities of the late government, and replaced them with others supposed to be in his interest, he retired to the state of Guatemala, leaving, however, a hatred to himself and all his party which no time can ever obliterate.

A new representative assembly, which met in the city of San Salvador in the month of July, declared all previous decrees of proscription void, and invited all exiles to return to the state.

On the 20th of September, the commander of the troops in San Salvador persuaded his men to declare against the governor, Antonio José Cañas, and that chief thereupon resigned his command, and was succeeded by Norverto Ramires.

On the 30th of January, 1841, a decree was passed by the legislative body, giving the name of republic to the state of San Salvador; but this title, being too evidently absurd when applied to a petty province containing 300,000 inhabitants, was never actually made use of, the old name *estado* (state) being still used on all occasions. The new laws and constitution

of the self-styled republic have also remained pretty much a dead letter.

The people of San Salvador soon began to regret the absence of Morazan, the only man of talent who had ever governed in Central America. Many intrigues were shortly set on foot to secure his return, and the overthrow of the new government; and the House of Representatives being suspected of favouring these schemes, was forcibly dissolved in the middle of the session, contrary to all real or pretended law.

In Guatemala extraordinary honours were decreed to General Carrera by the congress elected under his auspices, and the people of that state seemed to submit quietly to the absolute rule of this fortunate individual, who in four years' time had risen from a pig-driver to the supreme power. The servile party, who had brought him into power, having abolished the liberal enactments of their predecessors, and done away with religious toleration, proposed to restore the revenues of the Roman Catholic church, depriving those possessed of the land and houses formerly belonging to that establishment of their property (after the example of the Spanish government of Ferdinand VII.), without making any recompense for the robbery, which was to be called a "restoration of sacred property, sacrilegiously obtained;" but General Carrera, who began thus early to show the priests and servile party that he had no affection for them, though he had made use of them to get into power, prohibited the servile legislature from passing such an act, and remarked, that those who wished the assistance of priests might pay for it; however, all the eccle-

siastics exiled by the preceding governments were recalled and put into possession of their churches.

The state of Costa Rica continued peaceable and prosperous under the absolute government of Branlio Carillo, who, in order to separate the state more entirely from the rest, decreed the use of a new flag and coining die, which continued to be used till his government was overthrown in April 1842; since which time Costa Rica has returned to the use of the flag and arms of the republic, which also continue to be kept up in all the other states (though their laws and government are entirely separate): this, and the clause enabling vessels which have paid port dues in the port of one state, to enter those of all the others without extra charge, being the only remnants yet left of the federal republic, which still continues to exist in name, even while the states composing it are making war upon each other, and the inhabitants of the different states are actuated by the most intense mutual hatred.

The British government, in 1841, again revived the claim on behalf of the Moschito Indians to the port of San Juan, in Nicaragua, and Mr. Alexander Macdonald, superintendent of the British settlement of Belize, proceeded thither in the frigate Tweed merely, it would seem, for the purpose of keeping alive the claim; and on Colonel Quijano appearing, and, as governor of the port, objecting to some of his proceedings, he ordered him to be seized and carried on board the Tweed, where they shaved his face, and afterwards landed him alone on a desert part of the coast. This farce, however, hardly seemed consistent with the dignity of a British officer, governor of

a settlement. If the British justly claim the port of San Juan, they ought to send a sufficient force to take and keep possession of it, instead of making rambling incursions upon it, by which they give the miserable shadows of governments existing in Central America a just reason to complain that a bad example is shown them by the most civilised nation in the world.

Since the dissolution of the federal government in 1839, different proposals had been made by individual states for the formation of a new general government; and the states of San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, having finally agreed to elect deputies, and meet and discuss these proposals, the representatives of these states met in the town of Chinendega, in Nicaragua, on the 17th of March 1842; giving to the assembly the name of the national congress, and electing Manuel Barbereno president. The assembly then proceeded to enact laws and regulations for a new national government, which they determined should consist of a supreme delegate, chosen by the majority of the states; a body of councillors similarly elected; and a supreme tribunal of legal appeal from all the state courts: each state was to possess its own government, and separate laws, and to administer its own revenue; so that the proposed federal government would merely have had a nominal existence, which, though it might have commanded some respect in a peaceable and well regulated country, would have been utterly inadequate for any purpose whatever, in a country like Central America, in a lawless and half barbarous state.

The assembly chose Antonio José Cañas president of the nominal federation; but, as Guatemala was prevented from joining in any such arrangement by General Carrera, who did not choose to share his authority with any one, and Costa Rica also kept aloof from the federation, the acts of the assembly were never carried into effect, and shortly afterwards were entirely forgotten.

Many similar attempts have since been made to revive the national government, but without effect; the state of Guatemala, which, in territory, population, and riches, is nearly equal to all the rest jointly, being prevented from joining them.

Should such a government, however, be established by any means, it will manifestly share the fate of the last; and it is unlikely that they should find a more able or popular president than General Morazan.

A central government, possessing the whole revenue, and a large military force, is evidently the only one capable of ruling in Central America: and it is to be hoped that some person capable of forming such a government may shortly be found, as till then, the inhabitants cannot expect security, justice, or the least real liberty.

General Morazan, who, in the month of April, 1840, had left the republic for Chili, accompanied by his principal followers, having been encouraged by the accounts sent him by his partizans in the state of San Salvador, returned to the port of the Union in that state in the middle of February, but on his arrival, being discouraged by the statements of his friends, he proceeded to Calderas, then the

only settled port of Costa Rica, on the Pacific Ocean, where he landed his officers, and a few men who had joined him at the union. Having managed by his partizans, and papers circulated among the inhabitants, to gain a considerable number of adherents, he proceeded towards San José; and having induced the troops defending the Pass of Jocote (where a hundred determined men might defy any force) to desert to his standard, he entered the capital of the state without opposition, where he was received with every apparent sign of rejoicing by nearly all the inhabitants, and with real satisfaction by a large portion, who were tired of the absolute government of Carrillo.

The people assembled as to a grand festival, and named him provisional governor of the state till he could be legally elected. The most violent of the liberal party proposed to shoot Carrillo, but Morazan would not permit any injury to be inflicted on him, and gave him a guard of troops to the port, where he embarked for the state of San Salvador.

General Morazan having called a new representative assembly, was unanimously elected governor of the state; the acts of the former government were declared void, and the state, which for some time had formed an independent government, was formally united to the republic of Central America.

The assembly voted handsome subsidies to Morazan, who immediately commenced preparations for making war against Nicaragua, intending to march troops into that state, and after having reduced it, to proceed against the rest, and re-establish his authority in the republic. For this purpose he demanded the

levy of 2000 soldiers, and a contribution of 50,000 dollars; but seeing that the people, and even the legislative body elected under his own auspices, strongly objected to the war, and that all the men hid themselves in the woods to escape the levy, he put guards upon their houses, and declared that the women and children should be imprisoned till the men made their appearance. At the same time while carrying out these violent measures, he most imprudently despatched General Sachet to the port Calderas, with nearly all his troops, who were strangers and natives of the other states, to be present at the trial of a young and popular officer of the name of Malino; who, having forcibly carried away a young lady of good family from her father's house, and being reprehended and imprisoned for the act by his superior officer, General Rivas, had excited an insurrection among the troops, and put him to death.

For some time previously, intrigues had been secretly carried on for the purpose of overthrowing General Morazan and his party; probably, as it would appear, under the instigation of parties in Guatemala, where the outbreak was spoken of at the time it took place, though the overland mail takes fifty days in going from San José to Guatemala; and the most expeditious messenger, with a relay of horses, could not make the journey in less than thirty days. The real origin of this conspiracy is involved in a good deal of mystery, being by most of the natives attributed to the British consul-general, Mr. Chatfield; but this is quite improbable, as although that gentleman was supposed to dislike the person

and government of General Morazan, he is a man of far too much prudence to commit himself so far as to stir up an insurrection against any of the state governments; and it would, moreover, appear quite impossible that a stranger who had not even visited Costa Rica, could, by merely using his name as British consul, exert sufficient influence among the people to excite so general a rising; but, whoever was the exciter of the catastrophe, it was plainly at the time brought on by the tyrannical and foolish conduct of General Morazan himself, which was sufficient to have roused the most peaceably disposed people to revolt; and his leaving himself without the accustomed guard of troops greatly facilitated the insurrection.

On the 11th of September, the towns of San José, Heridia, and Alhajuela rose, simultaneously, against the government authorities; the leader of the first place being Colonel Pinto, a naturalised Portuguese, and of the last, José Maria Alfaro, the principal landed proprietor in the town of Alhajuela.

The government troops in Alhajuela and Heridia, being very few in number, were easily overcome, and the whole of the insurgents, under the command of Alfaro, marched against San José to the number of about 5000 men. General Morazan had with him, according to some accounts, 300 men, and according to others, twice that number; yet the long and resolute defence they made (eighty-eight hours), plainly showed that the result would have been very different had his best troops and generals not been despatched to the port.

Finding his troops overcome by fatigue, he, sword in hand, cut his way through the insurgents, and retired to the city of Cartago, which had not joined in the insurrection, and was supposed to be favourable to his party; thus he hoped to be joined by the people of the old capital, always jealous of the other towns, especially San José, the new capital; but as none of the inhabitants moved to assist him, he soon perceived that his hope was vain. Still he might have made his escape by retiring to Matina; but whether he continued to indulge false hopes of assistance, or had determined to fall with his fortunes, he did not avail himself of this last resource, and being pursued to Cartago, was taken prisoner and brought back to San José by the insurgents, together with two of his sons, and some of the officers and troops who still adhered to him; and on the 18th of the same month was put to death, together with Brigadier Villaseñor, one of the best generals of his party.

It appears that General Cabañas, together with fifty of Morazan's most devoted adherents, had, as soon as they heard of his capture, hurried from the port, determined to free him or die in the attempt; but they were met by a Spaniard of the name of Espinach (who had pretended to be much attached to Morazan), who dissuaded them from the attempt, assuring them upon his honour that he would suffer no injury, but that mules were already engaged to convey him to Calderas. Upon this assurance Cabañas and his party returned to the port, and the first proof they had of the deceit which had been passed off upon them was the notice of their leader's death.

Espinach, who is universally despised and execrated by all Central Americans of any honour, durst not visit the state of San Salvador, where Morazan's name is still cherished by a great majority of the people. Morazan's secretary, Miguel Sarevia, said to be a young man of great talents and rare acquirements, and possessing an amiable disposition, which made him universally esteemed, killed himself by taking poison, apparently in despair at the ruin and death of his master, and not from the fear of any ill treatment. Morazan's two sons, and the officers who were taken at Cartago, were liberated after two months' imprisonment, but expelled the state of Costa Rica. The troops which had been sent to the port of Calderas embarked on board the two vessels by which they had arrived, which were still in the port, of which they established a blockade, making occasional predatory excursions on shore for some weeks, when they sailed to the port of the Union in San Salvador; where, through the influence of General Malespein, afterwards president of the state, and then possessing all the real power of the government, they were permitted to land, and protected in spite of a decree of proscription against General Morazan and all his followers, which had been passed by the state legislature on the intelligence of his having called at the Union before proceeding to Costa Rica.

On the 23rd of the same month the civil, military, and ecclesiastical officers, having assembled in convention in San José, elected José Maria Alfaro provisional governor (*gefe-provisional*), and Antonio Pinto commander-in-chief, and declared all

the acts of the late government illegal. A new Congress, which shortly afterwards assembled, confirmed these decrees: thus, after a short revolution of three days' duration, Costa Rica again returned to its usual state of quiet, which has not since been interrupted; and, however cruel the conduct of the people might seem in putting to death the illustrious General Morazan, whom they had hailed five months before with such transports of joy, it has certainly been the means of preserving the peace and prosperity of the little state, which probably would have been destroyed for a long period had Morazan succeeded in drawing it into a war with the other states; and instead of being, as at present, a bright example of one industrious and orderly community in Spanish America, it would probably have been reduced to the same wretched condition as the rest of Central America.

After the overthrow and death of General Morazan, a temporary calm, arising more from exhaustion than from the establishment of any firm and settled form of government, followed for the remainder of 1842 and the whole of the year 1843.

In Guatemala, Mariano Rivera Paz continued nominal president of the state, the whole of the real power and authority being in the hands of General Carrera.

In San Salvador, Malespein, who had been the most active party in the overthrow of Morazan's government, gradually got all the power into his hands, being first elected commander-in-chief, which in Central America gives the whole power of govern-

ment, and at the end of 1833 chosen president, principally through the intrigues of Dr. José Vitero, the bishop of San Salvador, who had conceived a hatred to the legal president, Juan José Guzman, and endeavoured to get the authority into his hands, through Malespein, who he supposed would prove a convenient instrument, though it turned out that he was as much mistaken as the nobles of Guatemala were in choosing Carrera.

Malespein having been first put in power by the invading forces of Guatemala under General Carrera, it was supposed that he would be an uncompromising enemy of the liberal party. But when Morazan's partizans arrived at the port of the union after the death of that general, he not only admitted them into the state, but shared among them several of the principal offices of government, by which he considerably strengthened his party in the state; and had his after conduct been prudent, he might perhaps have induced the citizens to forget his former crimes, and the manner in which he had raised himself from a common highway robber to the first place in the government. Honduras continued to be governed by Francisco Ferrara, who had been elected governor in 1841; a name which he afterwards exchanged for that of president.

In Nicaragua, the authority of Pablo-Buitrago, who had been elected supreme director in 1841, was superseded by General Fonseca, who was styled Grand Maréchal, and having got the command of the troops, left the government merely existing by his sufferance. This man had, as is usual among the governors of Central America, raised himself by the

most atrocious villany, and, though a drunkard, and extremely ignorant and brutal in his manners, had the lives and property of all at his nod.

Costa Rica, after its brief revolution, relapsed into its previously quiet state, the people having fortunately imbibed a taste for industry and comfort, which prevented them from again relapsing into anarchy, like the other states.

The incongruous elements composing the governments of the four principal states, however, gave no prospect of any lasting quiet; and in the beginning of 1844 General Aice, formerly president of the republic, but then reduced to a sort of wandering vagabond, being supplied with arms by General Carrera, who was jealous of the favour shown by Malespein to the officers of the late General Morazan, made an incursion into the state of San Salvador, and succeeded in taking some small towns; but none of the people joined him, and being suddenly attacked by a body of government forces, his troops were routed, and he himself forced again to take refuge in Guatemala.

The San Salvador government remonstrated against this invasion; and, though the government of Guatemala disclaimed all participation in it, and even imprisoned General Aice and the officers who had accompanied him, their apology was not accepted, and Malespein, having rapidly collected a body of 2000 men, entered the state of Guatemala, where the government was in no condition to resist him, and, had he pushed rapidly on, he might readily have taken the city of Guatemala; but the troops

after entering that state, revolted against Malespein, and declared for General Cabañas, one of the best of Morazan's officers, and a man of moderate principles and excellent character; and, though he refused to accept a command to the injury of his benefactor, Malespein, full of rage and indignation at the preference the troops had shown for another, commanded a retreat, and disbanded the troops supposed to be the most favourable to Cabañas. In the mean time Carrera had got together a force of about 5000 Indians, with which, after the retreat of the San Salvador troops, he made an incursion into that state; but, as he feared to absent himself for any time from the city of Guatemala, lest he should find himself shut out on his return, he achieved nothing, and after taking a few small villages on the borders of the state, he returned to Guatemala, no engagement having taken place between the two armies. Hence the war had no result whatever beyond mutually impoverishing the states, in both of which the governments extorted forced contributions from all who could pay them at the bayonet's point. In San Salvador lists were made of all the traders and landed proprietors, with sums attached to their names, and if they neglected to pay the amount demanded within three days, their property was seized and sold for what it would fetch. In many cases where parties were really unable to pay the amount demanded by the government, the assessing officer called in a friend to value their property, and having put a price upon it, (perhaps not a fifth of its real value,) an order was immediately given to the same person to take possession of the property, and

pay the amount of the valuation to government, while no attention was shown to the prayers of the victims, even to granting them a few days to raise the sum demanded. Bands of men in the pay of government traversed the country, seizing on all they could find to make soldiers of, treating them more like African slaves than free citizens who were called on to fight for their country. The proceedings in Guatemala were scarcely less oppressive; but as that state possessed a much larger population and more wealth, they were not quite so ruinous in their effects.

During the dispute, the government of San Salvador had made urgent applications to the states of Nicaragua and Honduras to assist them in overturning Carrera's government. The Grand Maréchal, Fonseca, who ruled in the former, pretended to comply with the request, and raised 1200 men nominally for that purpose, but instead of assisting San Salvador, the troops were sent to attack Honduras, the government of which they hoped easily to overturn. Having entered that state on the 12th of August, they were, three days afterwards, attacked by a force of 500 Honduras troops, under Colonel Guardiola, in the town of Choluteca, and notwithstanding their superiority of force, entirely routed; when, throwing away their arms, they fled in the most disgraceful manner, not halting till they reached Chinendega. The victory was principally owing to the entire state of disorganisation of the Nicaragua troops, and partly to the determined valour of Guardiola, whose name continued afterwards to be a terror to all parties.

On the 25th of August, peace was declared between the states of San Salvador and Guatemala, leaving both parties in their former position, with the exception of the robberies made by their own governments.

Having made peace with Guatemala, Malespein had leisure to vent his rage against General Cabañas and his party; but, having obtained secret information of his intentions, they hastily made their escape to San Miguel, where they were joined by Barias, the governor of that city, who was also proscribed; and, having seized the arms belonging to the government, proceeded, with about 200 men, to the port of the Unión, where they arrived on the 8th of September, and chartered the English brig Diana to take them to Realejo, in the state of Nicaragua, where they found but little difficulty in inducing the government and the Grand Maréchal, Fonseca, to take part with them against Malespein, and the existing government of San Salvador and Honduras.

The Nicaragua government, assisted by the San Salvador exiles, proceeded to collect money by forced contributions and enlist troops, at the same time instituting a most strict cordon to prevent any communication with the state of San Salvador; but on the Constellation, a small coasting vessel under the Equador flag, belonging to a French citizen in Costa Rica, calling at Realejo in her voyage along the coast, the government took the master prisoner as soon as he landed, intending to seize the vessel to assist in the invasion. However, the father of one of the passengers, by name Chrisanto Medina, a native of Buenos Ayres, and an enemy to the faction ruling

in Nicaragua, found means to communicate with his son; and the latter, fearing that he would be assassinated if the vessel was taken, and be obliged to land, persuaded the crew to lift the anchor, and brought the vessel to the port of the Union on the 6th of October, where he gave information to the government of the preparations making in Nicaragua for the invasion of the state. Upon this information a treaty was concluded between San Salvador and Honduras, the government of the latter state being not only enraged at the invasion of their territory in the preceding month of August, but fully aware that General Cabañas's object was as much directed against their government as that of San Salvador: his well-known object being to give a preponderance to the liberal party in each of the three states, and having united their forces, to proceed against Guatemala and re-establish a federal government. Unfortunately, this scheme was better planned than executed; and this general, one of the very few whose bravery is unquestionable, and whose hands are unsullied with bribery, and untainted with murder, has, with the exception of his first achievements under the government of General Morazan, been uniformly unfortunate, and brought ruin on himself and his party. The aforesaid treaty having been negotiated between Honduras and San Salvador, the usual means of collecting money by forced contributions, and seizing men for troops, were liberally resorted to by both governments: the Honduras government, moreover, resorting to their usual expedient of issuing copper money for five times its real value. In the mean time, Fonseca and Cabañas

having got ready a force, invaded the state of Honduras with about 2000 men, but being, on the 1st of November, met by Guardiola with a much inferior force of Honduras troops, a desperate engagement ensued. Yet all the valour and exertions of Cabañas could not secure the victory, and after an engagement of several hours' duration, the Nicaragua troops were repulsed with considerable loss. A few days afterwards Cabañas, with a body of San Salvador emigrants, defeated and dispersed a much larger force of Honduras troops; but finding it quite impossible to enforce any discipline among the Nicaraguans, who absolutely refused to obey him or any of their leaders, he was forced to retreat into the state of Nicaragua; and the San Salvador troops under Malespein, and those of Honduras under Guardiola, having united, and forming a body of about 3000 men, entered Nicaragua in the end of November, and after defeating the Nicaragua troops in several engagements, laid siege to Leon, the capital of the state.

Leon, being the last hold of the party of Morazan, called the Coquimbo party, from the name of the vessel in which they arrived, was defended with desperation; and the Honduras and San Salvador troops were not sufficiently numerous to invest it on all sides, so that they could not cut off the supply of provisions: but the people of Granada, who had always been opposed to Fonseca (the possessor of all the real authority in the ruling faction), revived the party which had been nearly extinguished, and being joined by the towns of Managua and Nicaragua, established a provisional government, at the head

of which Señ Sylva was placed; and having collected a force of about 3000 men, marched to the assistance of the united forces of San Salvador and Honduras.

In the mean time, a number of engagements took place between the parties, generally to the advantage of the besiegers, and the San Salvador government having taken possession of two coasting vessels, fitted them out to act against the enemy, and captured another vessel which the Nicaragua government had taken in a similar manner. None of the vessels belonged to, or were paid for by, the governments, and only one of them was ever restored to the owner, and in a very damaged state, the two others being lost in the course of the civil wars, and the owners, a Frenchman and a Colombian, being left without redress by the respectable government which had seized their property contrary to all semblance of law or justice.

On the 18th of December the besieged, to the number of about 800, sallied out of Leon to open a communication with their adherents in Chinendega, but were repulsed and entirely defeated by 500 men who had been despatched by Malespein to lie in ambush for them. The leaders found their way back to Leon, but the troops were nearly all dispersed, and never again united. In the end of the year 1844, the troops of San Salvador and Honduras were joined by the auxiliaries sent by the new provisional government established in Granada, and the city of Leon was invested on all sides, but defended with a desperation previously unheard of in the Central American wars. Meanwhile the unfortunate city

endured inconceivable horrors; all the inhabitants, against whom any suspicion of favouring the besiegers was entertained, were assassinated by order of the Grand Maréchal, and the besieged even exceeded the besiegers in the unheard of atrocities they committed. Nearly all the houses in the district, of which they still were masters, were plundered, and dead bodies lay unburied in all the streets. It was proved, from the desperate defence of this city, that its inhabitants, though despicable soldiers in the open field, greatly excelled in this sort of warfare. But the besieged, being at length reduced to the last extremity, and having, like desperate wild beasts, sacked the part of the city which they still held, murdering even their own friends with unheard of cruelty, and violating the women in the most brutal manner, were deserted by Cabañas, Barras, Morazan's two sons, and the remnant of their party, who, to the number of eighteen, managed to elude the besiegers and make their escape on the 23d of January, 1845.

On the following day a general assault was made by Malespein and Guardiola, who placed loaded cannon behind their troops, to be fired upon them in case they turned back; and the two generals, and most of the troops being intoxicated, rushed forward with savage fury. The barricades were desperately defended by the Leonese troops for some time, but at last were all finally forced, and the defenders killed or driven out; after which the victors made a general massacre, no age or sex being spared, and no place respected. The women, who had taken refuge in the churches, were first violated and then bayonetted by the savage soldiery; and these sacred

edifices were literally filled with mangled bodies, and covered with blood.

Every single house in the city was plundered, and completely gutted, except that belonging to Mr. Thomas Manning, a British subject, partner of the English vice-consul, Mr. Forster, which was protected by a guard of troops placed there by Malespein. The Grand Maréchal had managed to take refuge in Mr. Manning's house, where he was hid for two days, but in a subsequent attempt to escape, was taken by Malespein's troops, and immediately put to death. Several houses were rased to the ground by the conquerors, and this being found too tedious a process, attempts were made to burn them; but the solid and detached nature of the buildings, and the absence of wood in all parts except the roofs, which were all covered with tiles, prevented this measure from having the desired effect to the extent intended, and they left standing a considerable part of the once beautiful and rich city of Leon, in the midst of ruins and desolation.

In the month of September José Maria Alfaro, who, from bad health, had ceased to exercise the government of Costa Rica for some time (leaving it to be administered by Oriomono, the vice-chief), finished his legal term as governor, and not wishing to be re-elected, Oriomono, was legally chosen in his place; but as he declined to act, Señ Moira was appointed to the office, and on his also refusing it, Señ Rafael Gallegos was chosen at a third election held in the beginning of 1845. And although disturbances were apprehended from the people of Alhajuela, who wished again to force the govern-

ment upon their citizen, José Maria Alfaro, against his will, they were at the time avoided by the exertions of all parties, and Gallegos continued to wield the government till the 11th of July in the succeeding year, the state continuing to progress in wealth and industry.

On the 20th of December, 1844, groups assembled in the streets of San Salvador, crying out "Guzman for ever, down with Malespein;" but the vice-president, Guzman, had not sufficient courage to let himself then be declared president, and persuaded the mob to disperse, and, though frequently urged to assume the supreme power, he positively refused it on several occasions. But Cabañas and Barras having, as stated, escaped from Leon the day before its capture, reached San Miguel in ten days' time, safely passing through Honduras without being discovered; and being there joined by about 300 men, they hurried on to San Salvador, increasing their force upon the march so that they entered the city at the head of nearly 1000 men. There they were enthusiastically received by the population, who rose in a body to join them. Most of the adherents of Malespein saved themselves by a precipitate flight; but his brother and two sisters, with his best general, Belloso, were taken and put in prison. A few were also put to death by the mob.

The vice-president, Guzman, being, by this revolution, freed of all apprehensions from Malespein, readily consented to be appointed provisional president, and the change of government was enthusiastically hailed by all the state. Intelligence of this revolution having reached Leon, all the San Salvador

troops deserted Malespein, and the new Nicaragua government, having brought a large force to take possession of the city, thanked the Honduras and San Salvador generals for their assistance, and intimated to them that their presence was no longer necessary; and General Guardiola, finding himself too weak, after the desertion of the San Salvador troops, to resist the command, though, doubtless, he had hoped to exact something more from the state, was forced to retire with his troops into Honduras. He was accompanied by General Malespein, who still entertained hopes of being restored to the command in San Salvador, and having amassed a considerable sum of money by his robberies, he was enabled to bribe the Honduras government to take his part. General Guardiola, having hurried forward with the troops he had brought from Leon, entered the state of San Salvador on the 2d of March with a force not exceeding 800 men, hoping to reach the city of San Salvador before the new government could prepare to oppose him. But in the mean time Cabañas, having collected a superior force, hastened to meet him, and a battle took place at Quelepa, about eight leagues beyond San Miguel, on the San Salvador road, where victory declared for Guardiola, who, passing the river Lempa, hurried on to San Vicente, where another engagement took place, in which the victory was claimed by both parties. But as Cabañas was immediately afterwards reinforced with 1000 men, making his entire force about 2000, Guardiola was forced to make a precipitate retreat after eluding the enemy in a very clever manner, having, in both his marches, plundered all the towns

on his road, and treated the inhabitants with great cruelty; a method which, though successful in striking terror into the enemy, seemed a doubtful plan of replacing Malespein as president of the state. Having failed in the attempt to crush the new government before it could be established, negotiations were entered into between the states of Honduras and San Salvador; but, as Malespein's interest was predominant in the former state, it was soon evident that they would lead to no result. The new San Salvador government having sent a request to that of Honduras for the return of the arms of that state taken away by Malespein, and of the two vessels which had been taken from their owners, as before stated, were met by a counter demand that they should do justice to Malespein, paying him the claim he made against the state, and again receiving him as governor till a new president should be legally elected. Both parties, therefore, prepared for an appeal to arms, by which alone it was evident the dispute could be settled. The people readily enlisted under Cabañas, who was declared commander-in-chief, and in a short time had 3000 men ready to march into Honduras; but symptoms of distrust soon began to show themselves between the different parties in government, which, moreover, wanted the means of supplying Cabañas with money, as, though all classes were ready for war with Honduras, few were inclined to advance any money to the government. Indeed, few had the means of doing it, as all classes were ruined by the heavy contributions which had been exacted from them, first for the war against Guatemala, and afterwards for that against Nicaragua, combined

with the total stagnation of industry throughout the country.

Honduras was even poorer than the contending state, but had the ruinous resource of issuing copper money at five times its value, and also of selling mahogany to the Belize merchants. The forces of the latter state were commanded by Guardiola, a man in all respects different from his antagonist, except in personal valour, in which he seemed even to excel him. He is a dark coloured mestizo, stout-built, and rather corpulent, his face expressing his fiendish temper; but well liked by the soldiers, whom he indulges in every way. To his habits of intoxication may be added every species of vice which can be named among the vicious inhabitants of Central America; and frequently, in his drunken fits, he orders people to be shot who have in nothing offended him, while at all times the most trifling expression, incautiously uttered, is sufficient to cause the babbler to be shot without mercy. In private life he is as brutal as can well be imagined. In all the towns through which he passes, he makes a habit of calling in the best-looking women he can see, and, after subjecting them to infamous treatment, he drives them forth with the most insulting epithets; yet he is certainly the best and most successful general of any now existing, and, probably, of any who have appeared in Central America. Like Marius, the Roman leader, his brutal manners serve to terrify the enemy; hence, while the arrival of Cabañas, and most of the other leaders, is looked upon without fear by the people of the contending states, the bare name of Guardiola

is sufficient to make all the inhabitants fly to the woods, leaving every thing behind them; and his mere appearance was, at last, often sufficient to terrify and put to flight a much superior force to what he brought with him.

Cabañas having entered Honduras in the beginning of May, proceeded without opposition as far as Comayagua, the capital, which he entered on the 8th of June; but the government of San Salvador having neglected to supply him with the necessary funds either to pay the troops or purchase provisions, great discontent was caused among the soldiers, who were daily left in numbers to return home. In reply to strong remonstrances on the subject, the provisional president wrote that he must pay and feed his men by the plunder of the enemy; but Cabañas replied, that he had entered Honduras not as an enemy, but a friend to the inhabitants, merely to overturn an unconstitutional government, and that he would on no account permit his troops to rob, whatever might be the result. It was now perfectly clear that the provisional president and his party had determined to sacrifice Cabañas, of whose popularity they were afraid. The San Salvador troops were left in the most wretched and almost starving condition; and Cabañas having spent the little money he could collect among his friends, for he himself was too honest ever to be possessed of any, the troops merely subsisted on what was sent them in charity by the inhabitants of Honduras, who were astonished at the moderation of their leader. But after they had remained three days in Comayagua, a report was raised that Guardiola

was at hand with the Honduras forces, and the dispirited troops absolutely refused to encounter him. The greater part throwing away their arms, fled back to the state of San Salvador; not fifty men remained with Cabanas, who was forced to a precipitate flight. On reaching San Miguel he endeavoured to collect a part of his scattered forces to oppose Guardiola, but to no purpose; so that on the 22nd of July he entered that city, which Cabañas was forced to abandon. Nearly all the inhabitants had fled from San Miguel, which Guardiola gave up to be plundered by his troops, only respecting the house of Don Angel Moglea, who remained to take care of a large amount of property, principally belonging to British merchants resident in the state of Nicaragua. Guardiola called upon this gentleman, and seemed well pleased at his having reposed sufficient confidence in him to remain in the city; he intimated that he knew the property in his house was British, which he was directed to respect; but it would appear that this was the only native he considered as privileged, as the houses of two French merchants, who had their national flags flying, were plundered and completely gutted; this, however, probably arose from their having left the city, afraid to wait his arrival.

Having sacked San Miguel, Guardiola proceeded towards the city of San Salvador, it being arranged that another force of 1000 Honduras troops would enter the state by the north, and uniting at Cajutapeke, march upon the capital; but the Honduras government, having exhausted its funds by so long-continued a war, were unable to send a sufficient

force for that purpose, so that Guardiola did not on this occasion pass the river Lempa.

In the mean time, all was terror and confusion in San Salvador: Cabañas having resigned the command in disgust, no one could be found to succeed him, and the provisional president was known to be a great coward. The bishop, however, preached up a crusade against the Honduras troops, having previously excommunicated Ferrera, the president of that state, and General Malespein, the ex-president of San Salvador, whom his intrigues had formerly raised to the supreme power; but he afterwards quarrelled with him as he would not be guided by his advice, and retired to Guatemala, from which he returned on receiving news of the revolution of the 2nd February 1845 in San Salvador. By the bull of excommunication, all parties holding any communication with the Honduras troops were also excommunicated; and, upon any of the invaders entering a town, the priests were to seize the Eucharist and fly with it, together with as many of the inhabitants as would follow; superstition, however, was at too low an ebb in the state to make this decree very effective, but the cruelty of Guardiola did much more to effect the desired purpose. Ditches were cut across the streets of San Salvador, and barricades erected at the ends of all the streets, the people appearing determined to defend it to the last extremity.

Meanwhile the government was in the utmost confusion, and the different factions disputed with the most bitter acrimony. The Coquimboes, as the officers who had served the late General Morazan

were called, formed one party, the bishop and his friends another, and the friends of the provisional president, Guzman, a third. The first stood highest in public opinion, but the two others, especially the bishop's party, excelled in intrigue; and even the vicinity of the enemy could not prevent their bickering and abusing each other in the most violent manner. At the same time, all the state between Honduras and the River Lempa was at the mercy of Guardiola's troops, whose cruelty caused universal terror and dismay; so that nearly all the inhabitants deserted the towns and villages, and hid themselves in the woods, where many, principally the old and infirm, died of hunger.

Finally, finding it difficult to maintain his troops in a country which they had desolated, and not venturing to advance upon the city of San Salvador without a larger force, Guardiola returned to Honduras.

The greater part of the months of August and September was spent in negotiations between the two states. The government of San Salvador appeared sincere in its desire for peace; but that of Honduras seemed only to seek an excuse for prolonging the time to increase their forces, judging from the result of the last incursion that they could not fail to take the capital of San Salvador, and destroy the government at one blow with the increased force they were preparing.

In the commencement of October two expeditions were fitted out from Honduras; one, under Guardiola, proceeded by land, and the other, by sea, to the port of the Union, on board the two vessels

which Malespein had seized from their owners to act against Nicaragua, and afterwards, upon the revolulution in San Salvador, transferred to the port of San Lorenzo, in Honduras. But Colonel Caravallo, who commanded the San Salvador forces, having tampered with Colonel Barras, who commanded a part of the Honduras troops, suddenly fell upon them in a valley called Obrajuela, full of indigo plantations, and before they could put themselves in order for fighting defeated them with considerable loss, and took 120 prisoners, whom he massacred in cold blood; and, afterwards, marching upon the Union, he took prisoners part of the forces employed in the other expedition, though the greater portion were enabled to get on board the vessels in time to escape.

Guardiola, however, saved himself, with the greater part of his troops; and having put Barras to death, and received secret information that Colonel Caravallo was in the Union with about 250 men, silently marched thither by land with a somewhat superior force, and unexpectedly entering the place, easily overcame all resistance. Colonel Caravallo and all his troops were immediately put to death, and every male in the place, except a few who were enabled to escape to the neighbouring woods, were put to the sword: afterwards, having plundered the government warehouse of the bonded goods, principally belonging to the San Miguel merchants, and ransacked the town, he retired, leaving the place in utter desolation, the streets and houses being full of dead bodies, and no person even left to bury them. He returned without opposition to Honduras.

After this, negotiations were again resumed between the two states, but, as they did not proceed very satisfactorily, Guardiola again entered the state of San Salvador in the month of November, and, on the 20th of that month, approached within five leagues of San Miguel, where a large concourse of people had collected for the fair, which is at its height on the 21st, and is the largest in all Central America; but upon receiving notice of Guardiola's vicinity all was consternation, and all the traders abandoned the city with the utmost precipitation. Bargains were left half concluded, and debtors were unable to pay, or creditors to receive, while all the merchandise which could be packed up was sent away in the greatest hurry ; and as nearly all the payments for purchases contracted in this state are made payable either at this fair, or that of the 8th of May, the great inconvenience and loss of such a dispersion may be conceived. But the authorities having barricaded the streets, and collected a force of 900 men to oppose Guardiola, the latter thought proper to retire without attacking the city. Both parties being at last completely tired of the war, and without funds to carry it on any longer, peace was at last concluded between the states of San Salvador and Honduras on the 20th of December, upon the terms, that Malespein should restore one of the vessels he had unjustly seized (the other being lost) to the owner, and that his family should have all their property restored to them, all the prisoners taken by both parties, to be set free without ransom, and that no punishment should be in-

flicted in either state, on the partisans of the other, for their acts during the war.

In Guatemala the absolute government of Carrera was continued, and the shadow of a representative assembly having been dissolved in June, 1844, he assumed the office of president of the state on the 1st of January, 1845; but, as the whole power of government had been in his hands since March, 1839, and the former president, Mariana Rivera Paz, and his ministers, entirely subservient to his orders, it made no real change in the government. During 1844 the state of Guatemala was the scene of two insurrections. The first was got up by Monte Rosas, one of Carrera's generals, who collected a body of troops, with which he hoped to supplant his master; but being suddenly attacked by Carrera at night in the place where he was encamped, about a league from the capital, his men, who amounted to about 200, were easily defeated and dispersed, and his horse falling as he was attempting to jump a ditch in his escape, he was taken and committed to prison: in this insurrection only two or three of the insurgents were killed. The second was a revolt of a corps, called the permanent battalion, on the 20th of September, which was promptly suppressed, though not before the insurgents had plundered some of the shops in the principal square. This revolt seemed to be without any more ostensible object than the hope of profiting by plunder. Some of the principal leaders were shot, and the remainder of the corps disbanded.

A revolt of a much more serious nature took

place on the 2nd of February, 1845; and, had it been conducted by men of ordinary courage and popularity, would doubtless have ended in a change of government. Carrera having gone to one of his estates, about forty leagues from the city of Guatemala, a revolution was organised by a party mostly composed of the self-called nobles and priests, who had been disappointed that Carrera had not shown them more favour after they had assisted to put him in power. They gained over nearly all the troops, about 200 in number; and those in two of the barracks rose simultaneously early in the morning of the 2nd, deposed their officers, opened the gaols and let out all the prisoners, among whom was Monte Rosas, whom they put at their head, and being joined by the greater number of the troops from the other barracks, they put to death or drove out all who adhered to Carrera's interest; and having, with the accession of all the prisoners, got together a force of about 800 men, and taken possession of all the government arms and ammunition, there seemed no chance of Carrera's being able to resist them, as he was without men, money, or arms. On the following day Sotero Carrera, brother of the president, approached from Old Guatemala with 200 men he had collected, almost without arms, but was attacked in the town of Mizco, and put to flight by 400 of the insurgents.

But few of the citizens showed any wish to join Monte Rosas, who was generally considered worse than Carrera; and the self-called nobles, who had excited the revolt, in the most cowardly manner bar-

ricaded their houses, and waited to see the result before declaring for either party.

Carrera showed that he was almost as cowardly as his antagonists, for when he was informed of the revolt, he was taken violently ill, and nearly died of fright; but some of his generals showed more courage, and managed to collect about 2000 Indians from the towns in his interest, though nearly unarmed, the insurgents being in possession of all the arms in Guatemala. Had Monte Rosas adopted determined measures, it would appear quite impossible that any force could have been collected capable of contending with him; but finding that he was not joined by the citizens, as he had been led to expect, he immediately despaired of the result; and having received 5000 dollars from the municipality, he left the city, of which he had held possession for four days, under the agreement that he should give up his arms to Carrera, receiving a free pardon. The convention was not, however, observed, on one side at least, and the day following Sotero Carrera pursued the insurgents, who were awaiting his brother's arrival to lay down their arms at a village on the road to Old Guatemala, and coming up with them attacked and killed a great number in cold blood, as they made no resistance; Monte Rosas, and nearly all the leaders, however, escaped to Mexico.

Carrera, having heard of the suppression of the insurrection, returned to Guatemala, and put to death ten individuals, supposed to have been concerned in the revolt, without any form of trial, and

contrary to the convention entered into by the municipality.

It certainly showed either an extraordinary degree of forbearance or cowardice in a man of the infamous character of Monte Rosas, possessing so large a band of desperadoes, not to have plundered Guatemala, and to have retired enriched with its spoils to some of the states, where he might have been received with open arms; and it was quite impossible that Carrera could have prevented his doing so, nor would the inhabitants of Guatemala ever have had the courage or unanimity to offer any resistance. After the suppression of the revolt, the state of Guatemala remained perfectly quiet for the rest of the year 1845; and Carrera, either frightened by the revolt or pleased that Guatemala had not joined in it, or becoming more civilised in his manners, seemed inclined to relax the severity of his government a little, and appointed a liberal minister, Don Guakin Duran, a lawyer of talent, and generally well spoken of by the people. This minister, after holding his office for a few months, was succeeded by General Pais, a man of the worst character; but, to the surprise of all, he has governed better than any of his immediate predecessors. Having been collector of customs at Izabel, he made some wise laws for the suppression of smuggling, by which he so much increased the revenue of the state that it is not only amply sufficient for the expenses of government, but has enabled him to pay off part of the debts due to private merchants, almost a new occurrence in the government of the state.

The bishop of Guatemala having died in the island

of Cuba, his body was brought to the city of Guatemala, to be interred according to his directions; and the funeral took place in the month of May, with all the pomp and ceremony which the government could muster. At the same time a conspiracy to assassinate Carrera was got up by a number of young men; but General Pais, the minister, having, as it would appear, received secret intelligence of the scheme, caused all the troops who were paraded (in number about 500), for a salute, to load with ball. The cannons were also shotted: and these preparations caused the attempt to be deferred. But the authors were not discovered till the month of July, when one of the conspirators (as is generally understood) having given secret information, a number of arrests were made on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of the month, and the whole plot was laid open. The scheme was to shoot Carrera as he was coming out of the cathedral, for which purpose ten or twelve young men were armed with loaded pistols, but hearing of the preparations made by the troops, their courage failed. It seemed to be a very foolish affair, as the parties had made no preparation for establishing any other government, and the death of Carrera under such circumstances would probably only have led to a state of anarchy till the government was seized by some person equally bad, who would have had to enrich himself by a fresh series of robberies; whereas Carrera, having amassed a fortune beyond his most sanguine wishes, has a strong interest in maintaining peace and public security in order that he may quietly enjoy it.

The state of Guatemala having (with the excep-

tion of the short contest with San Salvador) enjoyed an almost uninterrupted tranquillity for six years, has improved considerably in wealth and industry; and, although liberty, and even law and justice, are but an empty name under the absolute government of the ignorant and profligate person, who governs with a power more absolute than the Emperor of Russia, or the Sultan of Turkey, there is, perhaps, more security for life and property than in most parts of Spanish America; and, could the government be induced to establish schools on liberal principles, it might be hoped that the population, increasing in knowledge and morality, as well as in riches and industry, might in time be capable of appreciating and establishing a firm and respectable government.

The states of San Salvador and Honduras have, from their long civil war, been reduced to the most deplorable state of poverty and misery. Industry is at an end, and the people, though in the most indigent state, have become so reckless and demoralised that they will not work or do any thing to earn an honest livelihood. The cultivation of indigo, the only article of exportation from the former, and the working of the mines, the only branch of industry in the latter state, are nearly extinct.

In the end of March the election of a president took place in San Salvador; and the different parties, prudently passing by their favourites, almost unanimously chose Eugenio Aguilar, Doctor of Medicine, a man of moderate principles and good private character, though of but little talent. On the 11th of July an insurrection was got up by the Bishop of

San Salvador. This intriguing prelate, who had desired to govern the president, finding that he employed men of all parties, and but little consulted him in the government, hoped, as he had succeeded in overturning the two former governments, to destroy that of Doctor Aguilar still more easily; but having taken his measures badly, the conspirators got intoxicated, and commenced the attack upon the government authorities before the signal was given, and before the greater number of the insurgents had arrived. After a short combat in the streets of San Salvador, they were routed and dispersed by the government troops, about thirty being killed in the fray: and the proofs of the bishop being at the head of the revolt being quite indisputable, he was banished from the state by the government. Upon the revolt breaking out, the president, with characteristic timidity, had resigned his authority to Fermingo Palacios, the senior senator, and was only with much difficulty prevailed on to resume it on its suppression.

Honduras continues quiet, and at the election of president, held in July last year, Señ Gual (whose real name is probably Wall, the same as that of the famous Spanish minister who was of Irish descent,) was chosen. This, however, would be of little importance in the government had not Ferrera, the commander-in-chief, who, since the overthrow of Morazan, has been the only real governor of the state, and his general, Guardiola, whose very name was dreaded by all parties, resigned their offices. The new president is stated to be one of the most wealthy and respectable men in the country; so that

Honduras may possibly at last enjoy a period of repose and returning prosperity.

Nicaragua is even in a more miserable condition than any of the other states. Señ Sandoval, a man of good character and moderate principles, was elected director in the beginning of December, 1845, but the government is almost quite powerless, either in enforcing obedience to the laws, or punishing any infringement of them.

On the 18th of March thirty assassins, headed by a person called Bernadas Sumoso, seized a schooner belonging to the San Salvador government, in the port of the Union, forcing the master, an Englishman, to convey them to Realejo, where they landed, and, proceeding to Old Chinendega, cruelly murdered Don Bernardo Venereo, the most wealthy and respectable native in the state, having first compelled him to deliver all his money. They assassinated afterwards, in the same manner, Don Domingo Guzman and two Spanish merchants in Chinendega: who were among the most quiet and inoffensive men in the state. And so helpless was the government that, although Venereo sent them notice of the landing of the assassins, and asked a body of troops for his protection, they could not induce the soldiers to march for want of their pay, which, though it amounted to only twenty-five dollars, they were unable to raise.

Agriculture, and all sorts of industry, are at an end in every part of this state except in Granada and its neighbourhood, where the people are not yet so corrupted as in other parts, and though possessing natural advantages unequalled by almost any other

part of the world for agriculture, mining and trade, natural productions of great value, and a soil of unsurpassed fertility, the natives live in the greatest misery imaginable, almost naked, and feeding upon plantains and other fruits growing naturally in the woods without cultivation; while the state is reduced to the lowest condition of poverty and degradation, without commerce, industry, or the least hope of amelioration, till it shall be colonised by a new race of people.

In Costa Rica, Señ Raphael Gallegas, who was constitutionally elected chief of the state in the beginning of 1845, continued to exercise his authority till the 7th of June in the following year, when a revolution was got up in San José by the military officers, in which Gallegas was deposed, and José Maria Alfaro, much against his will, was forced to accept of the supreme command. The revolution was not attended with any bloodshed, and the motive for the change was difficult to guess at, unless, as is probable, the military chiefs thought that José Maria Alfaro would be a more convenient tool in their hands than Señ Gallegas. In the manifesto issued by the leaders of the revolution, no grievance is stated except one which might be applied to most representative governments, namely, that the legislative assembly talked a great deal and did very little. The resolutions of the leaders comprise the abolition of the former state constitution; the proclamation of José Maria Alfaro absolute chief of the state, for no specified time, (so that it may be supposed that it is for life, or during good behaviour,) the immediate election of a new vice-chief, who

must be a native of the state, not under twenty-five years of age, married, or a widower with children, must possess property worth not less than 10,000 dollars, and must not have been criminally punished, except by a pecuniary fine, nor executed for debts contracted in the state; must have served in other public offices without taint, and must be friendly to the independence and separate government of the state.

A new legislative chamber was to be immediately convoked by the chief, and the manner of election to be fixed by him; in the interim, the present assembly was to continue its sittings.

The chief shall be obliged, in the shortest possible time, to seek a good port on the north coast, and make a road to it from the capital, using for that purpose the funds of the public treasury.

It is much to be feared that this revolution may tend to disturb the quiet progress in industry and wealth of this little state, as a revolution brought about in so illegal a manner cannot be permanent, and may probably lead to a series of disputes before a return to constitutional government. This is much to be regretted, as Costa Rica is one of the few provinces in Spanish America which has made an almost uninterrupted progress in prosperity and wealth since its independence from the mother country.

During the year 1846, various attempts were made by different states to induce the rest to unite in forming a federal government. The 15th of May was appointed for the meeting, in Sonsonate, of two representatives from each state, but at the appointed day only the deputies from San Salvador and Costa

Rica had arrived, those of Honduras and Nicaragua arriving a few days afterwards. The deputies from Guatemala did not however appear till the middle of July, during which time one of the representatives from Costa Rica had died, and the other refused to act alone, so that the rest dispersed without effecting any thing towards a reunion of the states, or the formation of a general government.

It is evident that Carrera, who exercises the government of Guatemala, is little inclined to agree to the formation of any central or federal power which might afterwards be used to control his own authority; and the new government, established in Costa Rica by the revolution of the 7th of June, has passed resolutions declaring that state separate and independent from the rest; consequently no hopes can be entertained for the present of a resuscitation of the republic of Central America.

In the mean time, the states of San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, may be said to possess popular governments legally elected, and Guatemala and Costa Rica absolute and self-elected governments; and it is rather a bad sign of their capacity for enjoying constitutional liberty that the three states possessing a popular government are decidedly in the most miserable and disorganised state; but it must also be remembered that the three popular governments are almost newly elected, none having yet existed for two years continuously, which is not sufficient to enable us to judge of their effects upon these states.

During the brief period of the independent existence of the nominal republic of Central America (a

country inferior in extent to any of the other provinces of America once belonging to Spain, and only containing about 2,000,000 of inhabitants), no fewer than 396 persons have exercised the supreme power of the republic and the different states, under the names of chiefs, governors, presidents, directors, or ministers under these officers; which fact alone, without the preceding outline of revolutions and massacres, would show the unparalleled want of stability in the government of a country which, possessing one of the richest territories in the world, and a situation without exception the most favourable for commerce of any part of the globe, has reached the lowest state of poverty, while its trade is nearly wholly destroyed, and the people entirely corrupted and brought to the most wretched and disorganised condition of any country in the whole catalogue of nations pretending to the smallest degree of civilisation.

Little hope can be entertained of any permanent improvement in Central America till some man of decided ability shall unite the states and form a central government capable of making itself feared or respected by all parties, or till it shall fall under the dominion of some foreign power capable of forming a firm and powerful government of a nature suited to the country, overawing the factious and affording ample protection to the industrious and well-disposed. It is to be hoped that one or other of these events may soon occur to rescue this delightful country from its present anarchy, and gradually place it in the elevated rank which it would undoubtedly hold under an enlightened government.

CHAP. VII.

CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, ANIMALS, GEOLOGY, MINERALOGY, MINES, VOLCANOES, AND EARTHQUAKES OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

THE climate of Central America presents a most remarkable feature to a European, both on account of its great variety of temperature and its equality during all seasons of the year. The former arises from the great difference in the altitude of the country, and the latter, from the rainy season commencing in May (which would otherwise be the hottest season), and ending in October (which would otherwise be the coldest), a circumstance by which the year is as it were reversed, the summer months being, on an average, a few degrees colder than those of the winter.

Central America lies between 8° and 17° north latitude, and were the land low, would possess a climate somewhat hotter than the West Indian Islands; but the great difference of altitude has caused an endless variety of climate, from the average heat of the months of April and May in England, to that of the slave coast of Africa.

The whole of the coast on each side of the continent possesses, as might be expected, a nearly uniform climate, the variation of latitude not being sufficient to cause almost any difference, though the heat is a little modified by the form and position of the coast; but the temperature and climate of the

two coasts differ considerably, owing to the prevailing winds and figure of the land. On the S.W. coast the rains commence regularly in the beginning of May; and, with the exception of a short intermission (in some seasons only) of about twenty days in the end of July and beginning of August, continue till the month of October, and in some parts and seasons till the middle of November. During the rest of the year rain is almost unknown, a slight shower not sufficient to lay the dust occurring very rarely. On the N.E. coast the rains, on the contrary, continue nearly all the year, with a short and uncertain intermission of three or four months; the driest period being from the month of June to October, and the wettest from October to May. The consequence of this, as may be supposed, is, that whilst the interior and S.W. coast possess an almost equal temperature during the whole year, the N.E. coast is extremely sultry during the summer months, and is also found to be very unhealthy, on account of the superabundant moisture; while the rest of the republic, with some local exceptions, is perhaps more healthy than any other country within the same degrees of latitude.

Beginning at the most northern point of the republic, we find the province of the Altos (high land) for a short time an independent state, but now forming part of Guatemala. The average temperature of the table land of this province, where nearly all the population is concentrated, may be equal to that of Valencia in Spain, and in some of the higher situations the cold is intense, and greater on an average than in any part of Britain. In the capital, Quesal-

tenango, the heat is never so great as during the summer months in England; snow sometimes falls in the months of December and January, but it never lies on the ground, and the temperature never falls to within several degrees of the freezing point.

Solola, the next largest town in the province, has about the summer temperature of York, and the winter of Madeira. The climate of New and Old Guatemala is, in the dry season, about equal to the summer in the south of England, and, in the wet season, to the winter of Morocco, the thermometer rarely rising above 80°, or sinking below 50° of Fahrenheit.

The province of Vera Paz is about ten degrees hotter than that of Guatemala, and the heat gradually increases towards the coast.

The state of San Salvador lies, on an average, considerably lower than that of Guatemala, but the heat is never oppressive except near the coast. The average temperature of the city of San Salvador may be equal in the dry season to the south of France, the wet season being about eight degrees colder than the dry.

Many of the largest towns in this state, as Sonsonate and San Miguel, are situated very little above the level of the sea, and have an oppressively hot climate, varying from 80 to 90 degrees in the wet and dry seasons.

Honduras, as its name (depths or valleys) implies, has a very unequal surface; the capital, Comayagua, has a climate little cooler than that of the coast, but its principal commercial town, Tegocigalpa, is nearly as cool as Guatemala. Many parts

of the interior of this state have a most delightful climate, of the average temperature of the south of Europe; while the N. E. coast, including the two principal ports of Omoa and Trujillo, have a climate similar to British Guiana, the heat during part of the year being excessive, and the climate very unhealthy.

The greater part of the state of Nicaragua consists of plains and undulating slopes, there being no districts of table lands, as in all the other states, and of mountains, which occupy but a small proportion of the surface, being for the most part rugged and precipitous volcanic peaks, with few habitations on their steep sides; hence the temperature of most of the towns in the state, including Leon, the capital, is nearly the same as that of the S. W. coast. The cities of Granada and Nicaragua being on somewhat higher land, possess a rather more temperate climate, though not so cool as most parts of the other states; while Segovico, which is situated to the north, near the state of Honduras, possesses a delightful climate, its altitude being nearly the same as that of the capital of San Salvador.

The part of Costa Rica, where the population is concentrated, is a high table land. The old capital of Cartago has nearly the same average temperature as Guatemala; but being on the N. E. side of the Cordillera, the wet and dry seasons are reversed, the rains commencing in November, and ending in April or May. The new capital of San José, and the only two other towns of any importance, Heridia and Alhajuela, have a climate a few degrees hotter, but the rains continue fully a month longer than in

the states of Guatemala, San Salvador, and Nicaragua, commencing in the end of April, and ending in the beginning or the middle of November.

The northernmost states of Central America, in the centre and S. E. coast, appear to have the driest weather. More than half the N. E. coast is claimed by the British and Moschito Indians; and the parts which still belong to Central America are but thinly inhabited, by a different race of people from those of the centre and S. W. coast, who greatly dread the N. E. coast on account of its climate, which proves very fatal to natives of the interior.

The vegetable productions of Central America are perhaps more varied than those of any other part of the world. If the country were in the possession of an industrious and enterprising people, it could not fail to be one of the richest on the globe; but at present its only exports of any importance are cochineal, indigo, coffee, and Brazil wood. The three first could be produced in any quantity in many parts of the republic, and perhaps more advantageously than in any other part of America; but at present, the only parts which exhibit any approach to industry, are the small state of Costa Rica, and the cities of Old Guatemala and Amatitlan. It would, indeed, appear as if all the parts which were most productive in the time of the Spaniards were now the most wretched and abandoned, while the only two articles of cultivation, which seem likely to be continued, are of late introduction, and established in districts which produced nothing in the time of the Spaniards.

Commencing at the most northerly point of the republic, is the province of the Altos, now forming part of the state of Guatemala. Wheat of a very superior quality is produced in many parts of this province; but, as there are no roads, and as it must be carried on the back of mules by the tracks opened in the forest, it can only be sent to a short distance. The value of wheat of the best quality does not exceed one dollar a fanega of 300 lbs. in Quesaltenango, while the carriage of the same quantity to Guatemala, which is not quite a hundred miles distant, costs at least six dollars. About 2000 fanegas are sent in the year to New or Old Guatemala. This province contains considerable flocks of sheep, which may be purchased at about four reals (two shillings) each; the quality of the wool is very various, but none is equal to the better qualities of Germany or Spain. It is generally sold in Quesaltenango at a media (three pence) a pound, all qualities mixed together; when in demand it occasionally is worth a real (sixpence), but it is never exported, as the freight to the nearest port would cost more than its value in any part of the world; so that it is all manufactured by the natives into gerga, a coarse twilled fabric, thick fringed and bordered cheques and stripes for jackets, and large plaids, called ponchos by the natives. In the manufacture of the two latter articles, considerable taste is shown, and some of the work would not disgrace one of our Scotch manufactories. The prices of the lower qualities are very moderate, and decidedly cheaper than they could be made in England at the present prices of wool there.

The hotter districts of the province of the Altos produce vanilla of very fine quality, and caoutchouc; the latter might be collected in large quantities, as the tree is very abundant, but at present it is only used for making footballs, and the Indians of course only collect what they can sell; it is worth about a media (three-pence) a pound.

The state of Guatemala produced nothing when under the Spanish government, as the indigo called by its name was all grown in San Salvador and Nicaragua; but cochineal, which has been particularly described in the account of Amatitlan, has, within the last twenty years, proved an export of considerable value and importance. Cocoa, of most excellent quality, is reared on the S. W. coast, but it is not sufficient for the supply of the state, and bears too high a value—4 reals (two shillings) a pound—to make it available for exportation, even if the roads and other circumstances permitted it.

Coffee is also produced in small quantities for the supply of Guatemala; some large plantations have lately been made, but it is doubtful if they will prove profitable till roads are made, and ports established for exportation.

The principal produce of the state of San Salvador is indigo, which has been particularly noticed in the account of that state. But the province of Sonsonate also produces the celebrated balsam of Peru, which is called by that name from its having been taken by the Spaniards to Lima, and thence exported to Spain, though the article is only produced in the neighbourhood of Sonsonate. It is ob-

tained by boring a hole into the heart of the tree, into which a piece of palm leaf is inserted, a jar being placed below to receive the liquid which flows from it. It is sold in the city of Sonsonate by the Indians, who prepare it in small bottles made up of a sort of gourd, at about four reals (two shillings) a pound. The balsamita, called white balsam, is made by steeping the seed of the same plant in strong spirits, and is said to be the best remedy in existence for allaying the inflammation of wounds. Vanilla is also collected in small quantities, but of very fine quality; it is the seed pod of a small climbing plant, found in the same places as the balsam tree, but it is not here cultivated as in Mexico, the Indians merely gathering the seed pod when they find it wild in the woods, but never attempting to propagate it.

In the neighbourhood of the city of San Salvador and of Cojutapeke, very fine ginger, equal to the best West Indian is produced, but it has not as yet been exported.

A considerable quantity of sugar is grown in the state, and enough might be produced to supply all Central America. The sugar made in the neighbourhood of Santa Ana is the best, and forms the principal supply for the consumption of Guatemala; although manufactured in the rudest manner, it is often as white as English refined sugar, the crystal being the hardest I have seen in any part of the world, so that it can be carried on the back of mules, packed only in a few leaves, without the loaf being crushed or broken. A sugar estate merely consists of a small patch of cane, and a rude wooden mill worked by oxen, the pans being uniformly made of clay. None

of the mills can make above twenty quintals in a day, their utmost produce being twenty or twenty-five tons a year. Doctor Drivon has got a sugar estate at Sonsonate, with machinery imported from England, brass pans, and all other conveniences; but, from disagreements between him and the mortgagee and importer of the machinery, it has not succeeded well, and is now offered for sale at less than half its cost, without the least chance of meeting a purchaser.

The doctor told me, that what is called "chancaca" (the juice of the sugar-cane merely boiled till it crystallises, but not cleared of molasses), might be produced at 10 reals (5 shillings) a quintal (101½ lbs. English). The freight to Valparaiso from Acajantla, the port of Sonsonate, never exceeds a dollar a quintal, and the price there is from three or four dollars, sold as it arrives on board ship. But I believe that the difficulty of inducing the natives to work steadily, and the risk of all the workmen being taken away on the breaking out of one of the very frequent civil wars, to the utter ruin of the cultivator, are objections strong enough to prevent most persons from attempting any sort of cultivation on a large scale in any part of Central America, but most especially in this, and the neighbouring states of Honduras and Nicaragua.

Proceeding S. E., Honduras is the next state of the nominal federation; it is, naturally, by far the most rugged and barren part of Central America, and, though with an industrious population many articles of value for exportation might be cultivated, there is not the least hope of it at present, as, from

the continued civil wars and exactions of the government, the only branch of industry, viz. the gold and silver mines, is almost abandoned. A small quantity of sarsaparilla, and about 20,000 hides, are annually exported from Trujillo and Omoa; and the Belize merchants annually purchase from the state government from five to ten thousand trees of mahogany, which they cut and export at their own expense, paying the government a dollar for each tree, however it may turn out. The woods of this state on the S. W. side, produce many articles which might be advantageously exported to Europe, if roads were made. A gum, resembling that of Senegal, is very plentiful, and a number of trees and herbs which produce dyes of different colours, the most important being a shrub that yields a seed about the size of an almond, with a similar husk, and dyes a most beautiful and fast yellow colour; I cannot however say how it might stand the voyage to Europe. Vegetable productions have never been much attended to in Honduras; and the mines, which were always the grand source of wealth, are now nearly abandoned, and, unfortunately, have not been replaced with any other branch of industry; hence the state is fallen into the greatest poverty, and the foreign trade is reduced to a mere trifle; nor can industry, I fear, be expected to revive till it is inhabited by a new race of people.

The next state to the S. E. is Nicaragua, which possesses lands of unequalled fertility, the whole state (with the exception of the provinces bordering on Honduras and Costa Rica, and a few volcanic

ranges), consisting of plains and gentle slopes formed of a rich black loam.

Cotton, of a quality superior to that of Brazil, may be produced in any quantity. As much as 50,000 bales of 300 lbs. each, clean and pressed cotton, have been exported in the year, but like all other articles produced in this state, the cultivation is now at a very low ebb; and, though a machine, capable of cleaning 20,000 bales in the year was some time ago put up near Realejo, it is now almost unused, as the little cotton which is yet produced is nearly all sent to Costa Rica, without cleaning, or manufactured by the natives of the state into a coarse sort of cloth, which is used in making hammocks, sail cloth, &c. Sugar and indigo, the latter being equal to the finest Bengal, were at one time extensively manufactured; but the sugar now exported is reduced to about 100 tons of Chancaca (the name given to the cane juice boiled till it crystallises); and from 100 to 150 bales of indigo.

Near Granada there are a number of cocoa plantations, which produce an article only second in quality to the cocoa of Soconosco, and the coast of Guatemala; these plantations supply a great part of the consumption of the states of Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador, the remainder being made up by importations from Guayaquil. The usual price in Granada is from fifteen to twenty dollars a quintal, but none is now exported, except to the other states of Central America, as the plantations produce less every year, not being renewed, and are not now equal to the demand of the republic; and, as Guayaquil cocoa, which ought to cost nearly as much in the

production, is sold at from five to six dollars a quintal, the profit in Granada must be enormous; still, like all other branches of cultivation, it is rapidly falling off, and soon promises to be at an end. Brazil wood, cedar, and mahogany, are found in the forests of this state, in what may be termed inexhaustible quantities. Of the first named, five or six cargoes are annually shipped from Realejo; the tree has a very crooked and stunted appearance, and can be compared to no European species; it is conveyed about forty leagues to the port, and put along side the launches at Realejo, at from two to two and a half dollars a quintal. Mr. Bridge has erected a saw-mill for cutting boards, and annually sells a few thousand yards of plank for shipment to Costa Rica and the South American states; but, as he remarked to me, before establishing any work in these countries, people should import purchasers, and money for them to purchase with. A small quantity of mahogany is exported from Saint John's, the port of the N. E. side of the state (now claimed by the Moschito Indians); also about 15,000 hides, the remainder, about 10,000, being shipped from Realejo.

The state of Costa Rica yielded nothing in the time of the Spaniards, the only export being a small quantity of gold, produced in the hill of Aguacate; but since the introduction of coffee (the cultivation of which I have already described), it has made such rapid progress, that this year, 1836, 70,000 quintals worth in the port of Punta Arenas (seven and a half dollars a quintal) have been exported, and the export of next year is expected to reach 100,000 quintals; where it must probably remain stationary till the

population increases, as all the present inhabitants are not more than sufficient to work the plantations now existing. Chancaca sugar was manufactured near Alajuela, about 200 tons being annually exported for some years; but there is now little more grown than is sufficient for the consumption of the state. The tobacco of Costa Rica is of very superior quality, and supplies that state and Nicaragua; it is a government monopoly, and is sold for home use by retail, at 4 reals per pound, and for the supply of Nicaragua, at from 2 to 3 reals. Should the cultivation of coffee be at any time wholly or partially discontinued, this might form an important article of export, as it is considered by many people fully equal to the best tobacco produced in the island of Cuba.

Near the coast there are large fields of the wild indigo plant, which is manufactured by the natives to a small extent, in the same manner as the cultivated plant in San Salvador; a canoe cut out of a large tree serves instead of a tank, and two men, with common paddles, supply the place of the wheel for beating the water, to give it the desired colour. Near the coast there are also two or three indigo estates, that produce a few bales of indigo, which is all consumed in the state; but the great success of the coffee plantations has caused nearly all other descriptions to be abandoned. Wheat enough is still, however, grown near San José for the consumption of the city; that, however is but small, tortillas being preferred here, as in all parts of Central America.

Central America contains most of the animals

known in the tropical and temperate regions of this continent. In its vast forests are found the puma, an animal in shape resembling the Asiatic and African lion, but in size not exceeding a Newfoundland dog, also a species of leopard, called a tiger by the natives; and on the N. E. coast there exists a black animal of this species, which, though not larger than an English terrier dog, sometimes attacks the human species.

Monkeys are extremely numerous, and in great variety. The most ordinary are about two feet high, of a brown colour; another species, very abundant in Costa Rica, and some other parts, have long arms, and a body about three feet high; in the same state is found a very small monkey, whose height does not exceed nine inches, having a white face, its body prettily formed, very gentle, and easily domesticated. In the woods of San Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, large black monkeys, from four to five feet in height, are abundant; they are of a hideous form, and cannot be domesticated. In the latter state, I am told that a species of monkey has been seen with blue eyes, white face, and about five feet in height, but I could not obtain a specimen.

A small species of fallow deer is very numerous in all parts of Central America, and forms a common food for the inhabitants; when caught young they are easily domesticated, and become as tame as dogs. Hares, sloths, weasels, and squirrels, abound in most parts, and in the retired districts a species of opossum, not differing much from those of the island of Van Diemen's Land, is very numerous.

The vast variety of birds would form a large field for the ornithologist; a species of carrion vulture (called sope by the natives) abounds every where, and upon the death of any animal they collect in immense flocks to devour it; they are the scavengers in all parts of Spanish America which I have yet seen. Pelicans, and a species of pigeons, abound in the cultivated fields. Macaos, parrots, and parroquets, also abound in the woods; and ducks, teal, and quails, all different from the European species, in the lakes and marshes.

A great variety of serpents are to be met with, some being of the most poisonous sorts. The corral, a small snake, with a black head, and a beautifully striped body, is the most venomous species of reptile known. Its bite is said to be incurable. The rattle-snake (called cascaral) is also frequently met with, but is not so deadly as common accounts represent it. Some species of serpents attain a large size, and I have seen them exceed twelve feet in length; but the boa constrictor is only found among the swamps of the N. E. coast. One variety has a brown back and yellow belly; its motions are slow, and its bite is not venomous; it is killed by the natives on account of its fat, which is eagerly sought after, being a supposed cure for outward and inward bruises.

Lizards swarm in all parts, the most numerous on the coast being a large species (called iguana) frequently weighing as much as 10 lbs. each, which are devoured by the natives; in Punta Arenas, and some other towns on the coast, they literally swarm, and may be seen basking in the sun in hundreds. They enter all the houses, and steal any food they

can find; they are not venomous, but, if caught, bite severely. There is another variety of lizard (called avechuche) which is small sized, not exceeding two or three inches in length, and of a brilliant colour, being purple striped with gold, but exceedingly venomous; they do not easily enter the towns, and are only seen in the fields and roads.

Poisonous insects are by far the greatest pests of all. Scorpions, large poisonous bugs, and centipedes, are very numerous on the coast and middle land, but are not found in the cool regions. There is also a sort of spider (called cassanpulga, not resembling the tarantala, having the body of a blue colour, small legs, and working a large and strong web) which is said to have the power of poisoning any animal by means of its urine. From the mere touch of it several people have died; and the only remedy, it is said, is to immerse them in water till they are nearly choked. Bees abound in the woods, making their nests in the hollow branches of trees, which the natives frequently cut down, and hang outside their houses, where the bees continue to work quite contentedly; there are a great variety of species, many without stings: and there is another insect, with long legs and small body, called doncella, which makes honey and bright yellow wax.

Ants are in most parts exceedingly numerous, and the city of San Salvador appears as if it were built on a large ant nest; they swarm in all the houses, and every description of food, not carefully protected, is in a short time covered with them. A large description of brown ants (called sonpopes)

are very numerous in the fields, and exceedingly destructive to the cochineal plantations and the young maize plant, as they come in swarms, and in a few days eat up all the young shoots.

Many sorts of bats are numerous along the coast; and in Punta Arenas there is a sort of crab, a nocturnal animal, which enters all the houses, and not only disturbs people's rest, but destroys clothes or any article placed within its reach.

The domesticated animals are nearly the same as those of Europe, and the lama and alpaca of South America are unknown. Herds of cattle are numerous, but not so abundant as in many other parts of America; neither is their value ever so low, as on the estates they are worth from four to five dollars, and in the principal towns, when fit for killing, from ten to fifteen each; the dense forest which covers most parts of the country not being nearly so favourable to their increase as the prairies of North America, or the pampas of Buenos Ayres; nor does the uneven and rocky nature of the country afford them good pasturage. Horses are abundant, but never run wild, as in some parts of America; in the towns they are worth from ten to a hundred dollars; but mules are much more appreciated, being considered better for travelling on the unmade roads or tracks, capable of enduring more fatigue, and maintained with less food. Sheep and goats are only reared in the province of the Altos, in Guatemala, where there are large flocks of the former; they have been tried in the highlands of Costa Rica, but were found not to thrive, owing, it is supposed, to the dampness of the climate. Pigs abound in all the villages, where they

run about in a half starved state, and are always ready to pounce upon the food which a traveller may give to his mules. They also assist the vultures and dogs in devouring carrion: when fattened they are killed principally for their fat (with which the Central Americans besmear every article of food); their flesh is not much eaten. Common fowls are abundant in all the villages, and live in the houses, mixed with the pigs and inhabitants. Turkeys and ducks are also generally met with, and from the equal temperature of the climate lay eggs and breed all the year. Pigeons and rabbits have also been introduced.

The fish, both of the rivers and coast, are of little variety, and none that I have seen are of good taste or flavour; a small sort, like the tench, is the best description; none are to be found at all resembling the salmon, trout, heron, haddock, turbot, sole, or cod fish. In the lake of Amatitlan a small fish, called by the natives mojaro, is very abundant, but there is no variety of species.

Turtle are abundant on both coasts; the tortoise-shell of those found on the N. E. being the best and thickest, and fetching the highest price of any sent to Europe. Oysters are very plentiful at the Union and Punta Arenas, the former are principally found on the rocks, and the latter in immense beds, mixed with mud; they are of a very good quality, but an extraordinary size, so that they must be cut into a number of pieces to be eaten. The quantity appears to be quite inexhaustible.

All parts of Central America, with the exception of the plains of Nicaragua, bear the most certain

proofs of having at some period suffered most tremendous catastrophes by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. More than half the states of Guatemala and San Salvador are covered with scoriæ and vitrified stones, the greater part of which appear as fresh as if they had just been ejected from the crater of some volcano, though in many cases there is no mountain bearing the appearance of ever having been volcanic within twenty leagues; and in other cases the volcanoes from which they would appear to have been ejected must have been extinct for many ages, and now present no vestiges of craters, their volcanic origin being principally deduced from their shape, or the layers of the strata. In many cases the vitrified stones, which have been ejected and forced to a distance of five or six leagues, are of enormous size, and must weigh many hundred tons; hence, fearful as are some of the recorded volcanic eruptions, they are nothing to compare with those which must formerly have taken place.

In all the mountainous parts of the states of San Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, the broken state of the different strata proves the occurrence of a vast succession of earthquakes. Near Old Guatemala, the granite is in many places raised upwards several hundred feet, and the strata in places is broken off short as if the uplifting force had been applied to one part only, while other parts have been very unequally raised or, perhaps, depressed. In some parts, the rock appears to have been decomposed in some places, while others have remained solid; and the decomposed parts being washed away by water, have left immense ravines, exposing the

superincumbent strata to the depth of upwards of 1000 feet, the whole being composed of successive layers of scoriæ, lava, vitrified stones, volcanic sand and gravel, which have evidently been successively ejected from the neighbouring volcanoes, until they have attained this enormous depth.

In every part of the states of Guatemala and San Salvador which I have visited, the earth is mixed with cinders and vitrified stones, and the soil in all parts appears to consist of decomposed volcanic matter, with a small admixture of vegetable substances.

Between the city of San Salvador and Cajutepeke, the surface of the country is divided into ridges resembling the waves of the sea, the average depression and elevation appearing to be about 500 feet. In many places the granite and gneiss strata are forced up perpendicularly, and in others appear as if they had been broken off and turned over. The original inequality, after the catastrophe or succession of movements which caused it, must have been much greater than it appears at present, as the rains have washed down the softer parts of the rocks into the valleys, which now contain portions of level and sloping land evidently composed of materials washed from the heights.

Vast assemblages of boulders are to be seen in many parts of the states of Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica; in some places they are intermixed with volcanic rocks, so that it is difficult to decide whether they have been ejected from some volcano, or conveyed to their present position by an immense rush of water.

All the rocks I have seen are composed of granite, gneiss, basalt, or some volcanic ejection, no part appearing to be of secondary formation; and the sand appears all to be either of direct volcanic formation, or formed by the trituration of the rocks in question.

I have been informed, that marine shells have been found on the tops of some of the mountains of Costa Rica, but I could not procure any samples of them, nor have I ever noticed any on the mountains I have ascended there, or in Guatemala and San Salvador, in all of which the frequent appearance of cinders and vitrified rocks showed most clearly their volcanic origin, or their vicinity to volcanic vents.

Brimstone, in a remarkably pure state, is found in many of the volcanoes. In that of San Miguel it is very abundant, and resembles in appearance that refined in Europe. As this volcano is only fifteen leagues distant from the most excellent port of the Union, it might become an article of export, if good roads should ever be made in Central America. Sal ammoniac is said to be found in many of the volcanoes in large quantities, but I did not see it in any of those I visited. Diamonds have occasionally been found in the Altos, and in part of Honduras, and rock crystals are very abundant in many parts. Limestone is occasionally met with in all the states, and seams of coal are discovered by the convulsions which have taken place in all parts of the state of Guatemala, and, as I have been informed, also in the states of San Salvador and Honduras.

Nitre is produced near Old Guatemala, in quanti-

ties sufficient for the consumption of the state; and alum is abundant near Amatitlan, and many other places. Building-stone is pretty generally dispersed in all districts, but is not used to any extent except in Guatemala, all the houses in the other towns being made either of mud or of wood. The granite is exceedingly hard, being much finer grained than that of Aberdeen, with which the streets of London are paved, and (like all the rocks I have seen in Central America) entirely destitute of mica, being generally of a dark lead colour, and extremely equal and solid. Slate is found in many parts of Guatemala, but it is not worked, the natives universally covering the roofs of their houses with tiles; and the difficulty of conveying slate on the backs of mules would probably prevent its general use, even if any one had enterprise enough to attempt the working of the mines.

Though the vegetable productions of Central America are so valuable, the hidden treasures are scarcely of inferior worth, and in no part of the world are mines of the precious metals so generally found, nearly in every district. Commencing at the S. W. part of the republic, mines of gold and silver are very numerous among the mountains of the province of the Altos, and some were successfully worked before the Conquest, and during the Spanish dominion. There are also mines containing lead in a nearly pure state, the ore yielding upwards of ninety per cent. of metal; it is said, that some specimens contain as much as twenty-five per cent. of silver mixed with the lead, but I do not vouch for the truth of the assertion, as some specimens I analysed

did not contain any silver; and of a number which were brought me, none contained a quantity worth notice.

No mine is at present regularly worked in the Altos, though many old workings exist near Totonicapan and Gueguetenanga, the natives having followed the lode as long as it paid the expense of working, but never attempting to sink shafts, or work the mine in a scientific manner. The Indians still collect a little gold in the beds of the rivers, but not in any quantity worth consideration.

Mr. Anderson, a half-pay officer in the British service, and formerly governor of the ill-fated colony of Abbotsville, has lately formed a company in England, and brought out a number of miners, for the purpose of working some silver lead mines in this province, which are said to promise well. He is also engaged in working a mine, newly discovered, near the Boca Nueva, on the N. E. coast of the state of Guatemala; some specimens of the ores from which were previously shown me, and from some simple tests I applied to them they appeared to contain a considerable proportion of silver; but though I offered to analyse them, without charge, if the proprietor would pay for the necessary materials, he did not choose to do so, and I had not sufficient curiosity to lay out money for his benefit.

At the village of Patapa, nine leagues from Santa Ana, in the state of San Salvador, are some very rich mines of iron, which produce a purer and more malleable metal than any imported from Europe; the ore is almost close to the surface, and very abundant, and there are extensive forests in the

immediate vicinity, which serve for making charcoal; but the quantity of iron manufactured does not even supply the trifling consumption of the state, which does not exceed at most eight or ten tons in the year, and the workmen are so independent, that they will not labour unless the money is advanced some twelve months before they deliver the iron, which at present is worth ten dollars per 100 lbs.

In the same neighbourhood are several silver mines, which were successfully worked in the time of the Spanish government, but are now entirely abandoned.

About five leagues north from San Miguel are a number of mines, principally silver, many of which were celebrated in the time of the Spanish government. Among the mines of El Encuentro was one, called La Carolina, worked by a Spaniard about thirty years ago. Having laid out all his own property, and what he could borrow from his friends, amounting to about 50,000 dollars, he borrowed 50,000 more from the government, but, after getting the mine into working order, he in less than six months paid all he owed, and dying a few months afterwards, left 70,000 dollars, the produce of the mine, in gold and silver: after his death, the ownership of the mine was disputed, and though it would appear that he had just begun to find its riches, it has been since entirely abandoned, and the rains have now filled it with water. The mines of the Tabanco were even more celebrated than those of the Encuentro, and yielded upwards of a million of dollars annually, though worked in a most rude manner, without machinery; some few are still

worked, but to a very trifling extent, the want of capital in the country, and the insecurity of government, preventing all extensive undertakings.

The principal of these mines, said to have yielded 200,000 dollars annual profit in the time of the Spanish government, has lately been recommenced by Don Bartola Geral, a native of Valencia, in Spain, and brother to Don Francisco Geral, whose mining speculations in Costa Rica were so successful; he has been working it and another contiguous mine, for about eighteen months, and spent about 20,000 dollars, and has lately discovered a very promising lode of silver ore. If he had money to put up the requisite machinery, &c., it appears probable that the mine might yet be found as productive as ever; but want of capital, and the difficulty of finding constant labour, will, I fear, greatly hamper the speculation. Proceeding twenty degrees to the N.E. of San Miguel, we reach the town of Tegucigalpa, the centre of the mining district of the state of Honduras, which still produces some amount of the precious metals, although not one tenth of what they have formerly done. All the hills in the neighbourhood possess mines of gold and silver, the two metals being most generally mixed together; and although none have been excavated to any depth or worked with proper machinery, they have formerly yielded more than 2,000,000 of dollars annually, and, were European capital and science introduced, it is impossible to say what the produce might amount to. About six leagues distant are the mines of Guayaca, near which a considerable quantity of gold is collected. I am positively assured, on the best autho-

rity, that these mines have never been examined by any scientific miner, and the only stranger who has attempted working them is Captain Moore, a half-pay officer in the British service, who himself told me he knew nothing at all about mining, and had not seen a mine till he arrived in Central America. He was assisted by a native of the United States, a working miner, but who knows nothing whatever of the scientific part of the business. Captain Moore is a man by no means fitted to get on in Central America, being far too liberal in his dealings, and allowing himself to be plundered by the natives on all hands, and far too honourable and gentlemanly to compete with the Spaniards (who form the bulk of the population) in their low cunning.

The natives of Tegucigalpa are among the best class of people in Central America; and as, from the most authentic statements I have been able to collect, its neighbourhood would appear to possess natural stores of the precious metals, even exceeding those of the celebrated mines of Potosi, in Bolivia; it would appear a very good speculation for a scientific and practical miner, supported with sufficient capital, to attempt their working; perhaps the best adventure now to be found in Spanish America.

The ores generally contain from twelve to fifteen per cent. of silver, and from one to one and a half per cent. of gold; but the latter metal is also found pure in many places, and the value of some thousand dollars is annually collected by the Indians in the sands of the rivers, pieces of gold weighing as much as 5 or 6 lbs. being occasionally discovered.

Traces of gold and silver are found in nearly all

the mountainous parts of Honduras, which, as before stated, form nearly the whole of the state, and, were they examined by competent persons, no doubt most valuable discoveries would be made. From the vicinity of all parts of this state to the ports of the Atlantic, it possesses great advantages over the interior of Mexico, Colombia, and Bolivia; but the unsettled state of the government, and the wretched condition of the roads, certainly form a great objection: yet the roads in most parts of Mexico and Peru are equally bad, and these governments have made a habit of exacting oppressive contributions from strangers, which the states of the nominal republic of Central America are prevented from attempting to levy by their extreme weakness.

Some rich gold washings exist at Matagalpa, near Segovia, on the northern extremity of the state of Honduras, which are only worked by the Indians, who annually collect and dispose of a few pounds of very pure gold; but the precious metals have not been collected in any other part of Nicaragua, though traces of them have been found in the mountainous districts. Several veins of copper ore have been discovered in this state, one of which was some years ago worked by Messrs. Manning and Glentow, but, from the unskilful manner in which the workings were managed (for they had no miner to assist them, and were totally ignorant of the business) the speculation turned out a losing one, although some of the ores shipped to England yielded thirty-five per cent. of copper, and the lode was very wide and promising. As fuel is very abundant in all parts of Central America, it would appear that the ore

should undoubtedly have been smelted on the spot instead of being shipped.

In the district of Nicoya, lying between the populous parts of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and now belonging to the latter state, many traces of the precious metals are said to exist; but, as the country is only inhabited by a few hundred cattle-herds, and almost no foreigners have ever passed through it, little can be known of what it really contains.

In the mountain of Aguacate, on the road from the port of Punta Arenas to San José, the capital of Costa Rica, several very profitable gold mines have been worked; one of them was, till about six years ago, possessed by Messrs. Geral and Espinach, two Spaniards, who, in a short time, made a net profit of upwards of 200,000 dollars. They afterwards sold the mine to a private English company, by which it is still worked, and is said by the natives to be as rich as ever; but I believe the company has never made any dividend of the profits, though it is said that most of the people employed in charge of the mine have somehow netted very handsome sums of money. Two other mines are worked near the same place by an Englishman of the name of Philips (who I understand is a common working miner, almost wholly uneducated), and several by natives; but as the labourers prefer working in the coffee-plantations, there is, as Mr. Philips and several of the natives have informed me, great difficulty in procuring labourers, even at an advanced price, as the natives of Costa Rica, though more industrious than those of any other part of Central America, or, indeed, of any part of the old Spanish

colonies I have seen, are yet too fond of their ease to engage in so laborious a work as mining, when they can gain more than is required to live better than they have been accustomed to do, by the light work required in cultivating coffee; so that it would be almost necessary for any person attempting extensive mining speculations in Costa Rica to bring labourers with them.

In no country in the world of similar extent are active and extinct volcanoes so extensive as in Central America.

The principal active volcanoes are about ten in number. Commencing at the N. W. end of the republic we observe the volcano of Atitlan, situated near the lake of Panajachel, in the state of Guatemala, remarkable for the frequency and violence of its eruptions, the last of which took place in 1828 and 1833; on both of which occasions it vomited immense quantities of stones and ashes, covering the coast of Suchtepequez for many leagues, and utterly destroying all traces of vegetation and animated nature. Its explosions were terrific, accompanied with violent earthquakes, which levelled every building in the neighbourhood, and detached immense masses of rock from the neighbouring mountains; the whole surrounding country, for upwards of thirty miles, remaining for fifty hours buried in the most profound darkness.

Next to this is the volcano of Old Guatemala, called "fuego" (fire), from which smoke is almost continually issuing, accompanied with occasional explosions and shocks of earthquakes; but there is no tradition of any violent eruption, though, as I have

remarked when speaking of Old Guatemala, it has left sufficient monuments of tremendous ravages at some former period, the country being in some parts covered with ashes, sand, and other volcanic materials to a depth of more than a thousand feet; and immense masses of rock, weighing many tons, being hurled to a distance of five or six leagues.

The immense height, and precipitous cone of this volcano must render an eruption most fearful in its consequences.

The volcanoes of Pacaya are not distant more than seven or eight leagues in a direct line from those of Old Guatemala, and they would appear to have originated much more recently than the former, their eruptions being (as I have stated in the account of my visit to them) of a much more recent date.

Proceeding about forty leagues in a direct line east, we meet the volcano of Isolco, the only volcanic mountain in Central America which has been formed since the historical period. As before stated, it is in a continued state of activity, but has never caused any devastation in the surrounding country, which appears generally to be the case with those volcanoes which are in a continued state of eruption, the most violent explosions generally proceeding from those mountains, the periods between whose eruptions are longest.

The volcano of San Salvador has not broken out for more than three centuries; and, as it is only about twelve leagues distant in a direct line from that of Isolco, it would appear that the volcanic vent is changed. Its ravages within the historical period have not been great, but in some former age it has

ejected immense masses of lava and scoriæ (to a distance of more than six leagues) which cover many square miles. In all directions immense rocks may be seen thrown to great distances, but its most violent eruptions have evidently taken place very long before the time reached by any tradition, as the volcanic rocks are in many places worn by the weather, or covered with moss; while all the lava and stones thrown out by eruptions of which there is any account, and many of a more remote period, have a perfectly fresh appearance. The volcano of San Salvador is remarkable for the great depth of its crater, the bottom of which is now occupied by a lake of water. Dr. Weems, a North American gentleman, and the first person who ever descended it, conceives that it must at least have a league, or 5000 Spanish yards, (equal to 14,166⅔ English feet) perpendicular descent, even the half of which would much exceed the depth of the crater of any other volcano yet explored. The sides of the crater are stated to slope like a cone, forming a perpendicular wall on each side, the top being about three leagues in circumference; and it must have required an inconceivably immense body of lava to fill so large a basin, which it must have done before running over the top of the volcano.

Proceeding E. S. E., San Miguel is the next active volcanic vent. This mountain rises to an immense elevation from the plain, but has never been ascended. It has been estimated by rough measurements at about 15,000 feet high; but, as the plain below it is nearly on a level with the sea, it appears more majestic than any other mountain

I have ever seen, not excepting Chimborazo, the highest of the Andes. All the surrounding country for upwards of ten leagues is covered with cinders and half-melted stones, some of immense size, which have evidently been ejected from the volcano; and the site of the city of San Miguel is covered with lava and scoriæ, which it has ejected before the period of tradition, San Miguel being one of the oldest cities in America. Its last eruption took place in 1844, the effects of which I have already described; but some of its former eruptions are proved, by the immense masses of rock which have been ejected, to have been of a much more violent character.

Conseguina lies about twenty leagues in a direct line from San Miguel. I have already particularly described this mountain and its eruption in January, 1835, supposed to have been the most violent of which history gives an account in any part of the world.

Near the lake of Managua, or Leon, is the volcano of Momotonga, regarding which the Indians have a tradition of a tremendous eruption about a century before the Spanish conquest, when they assert that the lava ran into the lake and destroyed all the fish; but I am told, by parties who have visited the place, that this cannot be true, as the lava appears never to have reached the water.

On the road from the town of Nicaragua to Costa Rica is the village of Ninderie, near which is a low volcanic mountain, stated to have been in a state of eruption about 250 years ago, when some monks having approached the edge of the crater, saw a clear

stream of yellow liquid running below, which they fancied to be melted gold, and, having procured an iron bucket and chain, they let it down in hopes of procuring a sample, but the bucket and part of the chain were melted by the heat, and the monks baffled in their design. I leave those who have attempted to approach the crater of any active volcano to judge of the probability of the story.

The only other active volcano with which I am acquainted in Central America is that of Cartago, which I have before spoken of. This mountain has left most evident traces of the violence of its former eruptions; but they are all before the historical period, the only proof of its present activity being a small rill of smoke which may be seen from the foot of the mountain.

Near many of the active, and some of the extinct volcanoes, are openings in the ground called by the natives ausoles or infernales. They are generally of a small size, and nearly circular form, and emit smoke or steam. The principal with which I am acquainted are those near Amatitlan, Ahnachapan, San Salvador, and San Vicente; but I understand that they are to be found in many other parts of Central America. Those near Ahnachapan are numerous, and in a very active state. They would appear to proceed from the same source as the volcano of Isolco, which is about eight leagues distant on the other side of a chain of hills; about nine are in continued activity, and emit steam and smoke, accompanied with a rushing noise. Their sides are covered with brimstone, and other volcanic productions. It would appear that these openings may

either be the incipient commencement of volcanoes, or the remnant of those called extinct, though their fires are not quite extinguished. Hot springs are often found in their vicinity, and, indeed, very frequently in all parts of the country.

Half of the mountain peaks in Central America are probably extinct volcanoes, and there is no part of the republic where five or six, evidently of volcanic origin, may not be seen at the same time. The most remarkable of those with which I am acquainted, are those of "Agua" (water), mentioned in the account of Old Guatemala; San Vicente, remarkable for its lofty double-peaked top; Conchagua, already described; Old Chinendega, near the town of that name, in Nicaragua, remarkable for its sharp-pointed peak and detached position; and Tigre, a volcanic mountain rising out of the sea in the bay of Conchagua, somewhat resembling the peak of Teneriffe, but much inferior in height; also the extinct volcanoes of Telega, Managua, Masaya, and Nicaragua. It would appear reasonable to suppose that all the extinct volcanoes have become dormant before the origin of the active vents in their vicinity, as San Salvador appears to have done since the origin of Isolco, and, if the time required by some of the existing active volcanoes to attain their present great elevation (as that of San Miguel and Fuego at Old Guatemala) be considered, it will be seen that the extinct vents must have been closed for a vast length of ages, although the lava ejected from some of them appears as if it had just cooled; and it is evident, from the masses of rock ejected, that, terrific as were the late eruptions of Amatitlan and Coseguina, they

are nothing compared with some that must formerly have taken place.

As might be anticipated, in a country abounding with volcanoes, and which has been the scene of such great convulsions, earthquakes are of very frequent occurrence, and sometimes very violent. That of 1773, which caused the abandonment of Old Guatemala, is the most known, from accounts published in Europe, though it was not nearly so violent in its effects as some which have since occurred in other parts of the republic. The accounts of the earth opening and swallowing entire houses, vomiting fire, &c. (which I have read in some statements of the catastrophe published in England) are, as I have stated when speaking of Old Guatemala, an absurd fiction; and those who copied them from the Spanish narratives might as well have added the other interesting particulars of devils being seen to ascend out of the earth when it yawned, and to assist actively in pulling down the sacred edifices; and wooden and stone figures of the saints running away and beckoning the inhabitants to follow them, with many other occurrences equally novel and surprising. If such phenomena really occurred in the earthquakes of Lisbon and Calabria, they must have been much more severe than any which have occurred in Central America in modern times; but, as I have read the same fables regarding the earthquakes of Quito, Lima, Valparaiso, and Conception, borrowed apparently from the most authentic sources, and ascertained from personal examination, and parties present at the time, I am inclined to think that they never have taken place except in the terrified imaginations of the inhabitants.

At a quarter before nine at night on the 23d of April, 1830, a smart shock of an earthquake was felt in the capital of Guatemala, and stated to be the most severe since 1773. All the inhabitants deserted their houses, and passed the night in the squares and streets; and the government officers, and many of the inhabitants, fled to Jocotenango, a village two leagues distant. The injuries inflicted by the earthquake were, however, found to be not nearly so great as was at first supposed. Very few houses were thrown down, the principal injury being the demolition of the towers and cracking of the vaulted roof of the church of St. Francisco, and some injury done to the churches of Santa Teresa and the Recollection.

In the month of February, 1831, and again in September, 1839, smart shocks of an earthquake were experienced in the city of San Salvador, both of which ruined a great part of the city, and caused the terrified inhabitants to fly from it. In the latter, three distinct shocks were felt, immediately preceded by a loud report like a distant discharge of a park of artillery. The shock, which seemed to come in a horizontal direction from the volcano, overturned a great number of buildings. The government officers, and most of the inhabitants, fled to the town of Cajutepeke, which, although only ten leagues distant, was not affected by the earthquake, where they remained nearly a month before venturing to return.

Cartago, the old capital of Costa Rica, was, on the 2nd of September 1841, nearly levelled with the ground by a succession of violent shocks of earthquake, and, of about 3000 houses previously existing, not 100 remained entire. Of eight churches, also,

seven were entirely ruined, while one of them, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, (and, as the inhabitants suppose, preserved by her special care,) was uninjured; unfortunately it is the smallest and ugliest of the whole, but its preservation is proof of the partial effects of earthquakes.

In May, 1844, a succession of violent shocks of earthquakes was felt along the N.E. coast of Nicaragua, which nearly ruined the city of Granada, and did a great deal of damage to the town of Nicaragua, the water in the lake of Nicaragua having been observed to rise and fall several times, as if it possessed a tide.

In the end of March, 1845, several violent shocks of earthquakes were felt in the towns of Amatitlan, Patapa, Paling, and other parts, near the volcanoes of Pacaya, which had been in an unusually quiet state for some time previously. These shocks were continued during all the month of April, and hardly left a house standing in the district, forcing the people to live in the woods, or in the fields in sheds made of cane, which could not be shaken down. Many people left the vicinity, dreading that it would end in some terrible convulsion; but, finally, on the 3rd of May, the volcano of Tormento, at Pacaya, threw out large volumes of flame and smoke, accompanied by loud explosions, and has continued burning ever since. Since this period no severe earthquakes have been experienced in the vicinity, though slight shocks may be felt almost daily.

In Sonsonate, on the 26th of May, 1846, I felt the smartest shock of an earthquake I have experienced in Central America. It was preceded

by a noise resembling a number of coaches at full gallop, or the passing of a railway train, and violently shook the house where I was residing, but, as far as I could ascertain, did not throw down any building. The inhabitants said it was the hardest shock they had felt; Sonsonate, probably owing to its immediate vicinity to the volcano of Isolco, which is continually burning, not being liable to violent earthquakes. It had, however, been remarked that the volcano was remarkably quiet for some time previously.

The vicinity of active volcanoes is always very liable to shocks of earthquake, but they are often so slight that a stranger does not perceive them; and as long as the volcano is in a state of activity no severe shocks ever occur; but when a volcano, generally in a state of activity, has been quiet for some time, there is cause for apprehension in its vicinity.

The shocks would appear to be of two classes; viz. perpendicular, which are only felt in the immediate vicinity of volcanoes, and horizontal, which reach considerable distances from the place where they originate, and are very unequal in their progress, in some parts rocking the ground violently, and in others in their direct line, nearer their source, being but slightly felt; this, doubtless, arises from the nature of the superincumbent strata.

CHAP. VIII.

ARTICLES OF FOOD. — HOUSES AND FURNITURE. — VALUE OF LAND AND HOUSES. — BELGIAN COLONY OF SAINT THOMAS. — COMMERCE. — REVENUE. — CUSTOMS. — CURRENCY. — DEBT. — PORTS. — RIVERS AND LAKES.

THE mode of living in Central America is extremely different from that of any part of the old world. Though wheat, barley, and other European grains, have been long introduced, they are only grown to some extent in the province of the Altos, the state of Guatemala, and in small quantities on the table land of the other states; and wheaten bread is only used by a few individuals in the principal towns, and even there more as a luxury than an article of food. The universal food of all classes consists of maize or Indian corn, boiled, and ground to a pulp between two stones, in which state it is made into cakes, and toasted over the fire upon an earthen girdle, such as the Indians have doubtless used for ages. Every house is provided with stones for grinding the maize, and every Indian and mestizo woman understands the manufacture of these cakes, which are called tortilios. Next to tortilios, the food most in use is a sort of French bean (called frijoles), generally of a black colour, but possessing scarcer varieties, which are red, brown, and white. These beans, when eaten by the natives, are boiled in water, which is drained off, and the beans mashed and mixed with hog's lard (manteca).

In the villages, meat, as soon as killed, is cut into long stripes and dried in the sun, and when prepared for eating is always fried in hog's lard, a most necessary article in all sorts of Central American cookery, though most disgusting to a native of Great Britain. In the cities, cookery is of course differently managed, but even there nearly every thing is daubed with hog's lard, and the stranger finds great difficulty in inducing the natives to give him his food without besmearing it with this article. The upper classes have copied the Spanish taste in eating a great quantity of fruit, vegetables, salad, and sweetmeats. Solid joints of meat, as in England, are unknown.

Chocolate is the universal beverage, and is preferred by natives to all others; but, combined with the immense quantities of hog's lard consumed by all classes, it is certainly most unhealthy, as is proved by the continued stomachic complaints from which nearly all the natives suffer. In Costa Rica, however, the use of chocolate is giving way to that of coffee, and a few individuals who have visited the ports have learnt to prefer tea, though as yet the quantity used is very trifling.

Wines and foreign spirits are very little used, but the working classes always spend a large part of their earnings on an intoxicating liquor, made either from the crude juice of the sugar cane or ripe plantains, which is of a most unwholesome quality, and causes a great deal of sickness.

Smoking tobacco is the universal passion of all classes, ages, and sexes, and it is not thought by any means rude to stop a lady in the street and ask her for a light from her cigar, nor strange for a lady to make

the same request of any gentleman. The ladies of the higher classes generally smoke small cigars, made by rolling chopped tobacco in pieces of paper, large cigars not being fashionable for females.

The houses in Central America always consist of a ground story only, and in nearly all the cities and towns, except the capital of Guatemala, they are formed of what is called tapial, being common earth put moist into boxes of the dimensions of the walls, and beaten with mallets; the boxes are without top or bottom, and in order that the masses of beaten earth may be properly joined together, one of the ends is also taken out, the sides being fastened together with four round sticks, which are removed as soon as the earth has been properly hardened, leaving only small holes in the wall, which are filled up with a little mud; and the boxes are removed from place to place till the wall is completed, a few stones mixed with mud being placed at the angles. As all the houses are protected by projecting roofs, and generally by wide corridors, these walls cannot get wet, and last for a long period, though they are always unseemly, and form nests for all species of insects.

Another sort of building, very common in the country and smaller towns, is made by driving a number of poles into the ground, at the distance of a yard or two from each other in the part where it is intended to form the walls of the house. To these, long canes are tied with a species of climbing plant (very suitable for that purpose, and abundant in most of the woods), and the space between the canes is filled up with mud, or a mixture

of mud and stones, and when dry the outside is plastered over with mortar; this description of building is called bajerique.

The climate of Costa Rica is found to be too moist for tapial buildings; hence part of the houses are there made of bajerique, but the great majority are formed of cedar planks, which have the advantage of being put up with less labour than any other sort of building, though for security, and excluding heat and cold, it is much inferior to that used in the other states.

Window glass is only used in the better houses of the principal cities, and in the smaller towns all descriptions of windows are considered superfluous; hence in doing any thing requiring a portion of light it is necessary to open the door, when dogs, pigs, and fowls, are always ready to rush in. All the more respectable houses are roofed with tiles, the use of slates or shingles being unknown, and the poorer houses being covered with straw and reed grass.

The reason given in all parts of Spanish America for making the houses of a ground story only, is the frequency of earthquakes, and most strangers seem to have held this reason to be quite sufficient; but its invalidity is proved by the durability of the churches, which have sometimes spires upwards of 100 feet high. Many of these, which have been built for some centuries, may stand till visited by one of those rare convulsions which indiscriminately level the palace and the peasant's hut. The true reason is to be found in the indolence of the inhabitants, and their slowness in adopting improvements, their present houses being exactly of the shape, size, and materials,

in which they were built by the Indians at the time of the conquest; and no improvements being ever attempted in the buildings, customs, or manufactures of the aboriginal inhabitants.

The only articles of furniture invariably found in a house, are a large hammock, a table, a bedstead without mattress, and two or three chairs; the latter being merely a frame of hard wood tied together, with straps of raw hide stretched across, forming a more elastic and durable seat than cane. The hammocks are generally made of a sort of hemp, extracted from the heart of the wild pine-apple leaf, much resembling fine Manilla hemp, dyed of different colours and twisted in fine cords, which are afterwards plaited into the required shape. They are handsome in appearance, and extremely durable, while the price is very moderate, being from twelve reals to two dollars (from six to eight shillings) for hammocks eight to twelve yards long.

Carpets are unknown, but the brick floors of a few of the principal houses are covered with figured matting made by the Indians near Sonsonate, of a sort of flat grass, which are very moderate in price, and not a bad substitute for carpets. Very tolerable furniture is now manufactured by the native carpenters in Guatemala, and at prices which have quite put an end to its importation from abroad. Cedar, mahogany, rose-wood, and a variety of most beautiful woods for cabinet work, are indigenous to Central America; but the first named is the only description made use of, its cutting and manufacture being attended with much less labour than any other. The only luxury in furniture, for which the

Central Americans and all the Creole Spaniards show a passion, is prints and paintings, which cover the walls of all respectable houses. In the cities, the most common are French, with, occasionally, a few English prints. Tolerable foreign paintings are of course rarely seen, and only in a few of the first houses; but figures of the saints, painted in the country, are stuck upon the walls of every house, and are the general remedy employed for all kinds of sickness, each complaint having its patron saint; and if these do no good, they are, probably, at least less noxious than the quack medicines used by the poor in England. Furnished lodgings are never to be met with in any part of Spanish America, not even in the capitals; and when a stranger has succeeded in engaging apartments he finds, on entering, nothing but bare walls, and has, probably, the first night (before furniture can be procured) to sleep on the floor, in company with fleas, neguas, and many other unpleasant bed-fellows, unless he be so far naturalised as to carry a hammock with him on all occasions.

All the roads in Central America, with the single exception of that from San José to Punta Arenas, in Costa Rica, are merely tracks made passable for mules, by cutting down the trees in the woods; and where a precipice is met with, making an excavation like a ditch, to admit the passage of a single mule.

The old footpaths of the aboriginal Indians seem universally to have been followed, no attempt being ever made to seek the most level track, or to drain or put metal on the roads; hence they generally form channels for the water in the rainy season, and, ex-

cept in rare instances, are not even filled up in the dry season, when they resemble the dry beds of mountain torrents; and would, with English horses, be quite impassable, even for single riders. But the horses, and more especially the mules of the country, are so accustomed to them that they will ascend hills, wind along the edge of precipices, and climb among loose, slippery stones, in a manner that would baffle most persons on foot.

The mode of travelling is on the back of mules, either hired or purchased. A stranger finds it difficult to procure them, as the natives are very suspicious, and afraid of being robbed of their beasts. Hired mules are always sent with merely a rope round their neck, every person being supposed to furnish his own saddle and bridle, and the hire is always paid beforehand.

No inns, nor any sort of houses for public accommodation, exist in Central America, but every town or village possesses a public building, called the cabildo, where justice is administered, and the meetings of the town officers are held; here, all travellers having a government passport are entitled to sleep at night, paying two reals (one shilling) for its hire, the constable (aguacil) being obliged to furnish them with fire and water, and purchase for them at the current price whatever the place will afford. Where there is no cabildo, and, indeed, in most parts, the inhabitants rarely object to admit a stranger into their houses, without expecting any payment beyond the value of what they may eat, but in this case, as there are never more than one or two rooms to accommodate the whole family and brute attend-

ants, the traveller has only the liberty of hanging his cot among multitudes of men, women, children, pigs, and fowls, which make such a snoring, squalling, yelping, grunting, and cackling all night, that it would require a considerable apprenticeship to the business before he can get any sleep.

As might be anticipated (in a country of which not one hundredth part of the available soil is cultivated) the value of the land is nearly nominal, and, in ordinary cases, is actually of no marketable value whatever, except in the vicinity of some large town. Still, the lands in the state of Guatemala suitable for the growth of the "cactus cochinelifer," and where the climate is fit for the growth of cochineal, and in Costa Rica, where it is found suitable for the growth of coffee, fetch a pretty fair price.

The choice lands near Old Guatemala for forming cochineal estates are worth about 800 dollars a mansana, or 98*l.* per English acre; and those similarly situated near Amatitlan, about 500 dollars a mansana, or 61*l.* 5*s.* per English acre, while the best lands near the capital may be purchased at 20 dollars a mansana, or 2*l.* 9*s.* per English acre. The best land in the immediate vicinity of the capitals of the states of San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, are certainly not worth so much, though capable of producing almost any of the numerous articles cultivated in Central America.

At a distance from the towns, estates can seldom be sold for the value of the improvements upon them, unless they are of such extent as to maintain large herds of cattle; and one of this description, belong-

ing to Don Manuel Oliveres, on the road about half way between Guatemala and Sonsonate, with a large house, and other buildings, possessing 2000 caballeros, or 210,800 acres of land, a considerable part of which is capable of cultivation, was lately offered for 40,000 dollars, four years' credit, or 10,000 dollars annually, and could doubtless be purchased much cheaper for ready money, but is not at all likely to meet a purchaser. The best indigo estates in San Salvador may now be purchased for much less than the cost of the buildings and vats; and the sugar estate belonging to Dr. Drivon, at Sonsonate, the buildings and machinery of which have cost upwards of 50,000 dollars, though possessing all the advantages which could be united together in any part of the country, such as being only a league distant from Sonsonate, on the road to the port of Acajantla, from which it is only four leagues distant, with a good road, possessing ample lands of good quality, an inexhaustible supply of water for irrigation and the working of machinery in all seasons, is not valued at more than 10,000 dollars; and even that sum could probably not be obtained without a long credit.

In Honduras, or Nicaragua, no person would dream of purchasing land for cultivation at any price, though a great portion of the latter state is of the richest black loam, of almost unequalled fertility, and capable of producing crops of sugar-cane, rice, cotton, or indigo, equal, if not superior, to any other part of the known world. The best coffee lands in the immediate vicinity of San José, in Costa Rica, are worth 100 dollars a mansana, or 12*l.* 6*s.*

an English acre; while the value of those in the neighbourhood of Heridia and Alhajuela varies from 20 to 50 dollars a mansana. In other parts of the state the price is nearly nominal.

Houses in towns can almost never be sold for the cost of their construction, allowing nothing for the land on which they are built. In Guatemala, they have a nominal value attached to them which could never be realised; but there, and in all parts, they are generally sold at a price much above their value, judging from the rents paid, and the current interest of money.

In most countries in Europe, land is the favourite investment, and yields the smallest return for capital, in Central America it is nearly unsaleable, whereas houses find ready purchasers; for example,—

A house occupied by H. B. M. vice-consul in Guatemala, at a rent of 500 dollars per annum, is valued at 15,000 dollars.

A house let in San Salvador at 300 dollars per annum, is valued at 6000.

A house in San Miguel, let at 600 dollars, was sold by auction for 8000.

A house in Chinendega, let at 300 dollars, was sold by private contract for 10,000.

A house in San José, Costa Rica, let at 150 dollars per annum, was sold at 4000.

It must, however, be allowed, that except in the commercial towns of the states of Guatemala and Costa Rica, a sale could hardly, at present, be effected at any price.

In May, 1842, an agreement was entered into be-

tween a Belgian company and the existing government of the state of Guatemala, and after some little delay a further convention was signed between them in October, 1843. The principal articles were the conditional sale to the Belgian company of the lands lying between the left bank of the river Matagua, and the right bank of the river Cajabon and Polochic, including all the coast and neighbouring islands within these limits, and proceeding inland as far as Gualan, and the interior limits of the province of Saint Thomas, the company paying at the rate of twenty dollars the caballeros, or, as nearly as may be, 105⅔ British statute acres; 16,000 dollars to be paid annually, till the amount is completed. The company also binds itself to present to the Guatemala government 2000 muskets similar to those used in the Belgian army, and four large guns, and to pay the fifth part of the expenses of erecting a city at Saint Thomas, to make a cart road to the river Matagua, and to introduce steamers for navigating the river. The company also bound itself to introduce into the purchased territory at least a hundred families of five members each, annually, till the number of one thousand families was completed.

The colonists must be all Roman Catholics from the agricultural countries of continental Europe, or the Canary Isles; and from the moment of their landing are to be reckoned as Guatemala citizens, and lose all right to make any claim against the state, through their own government or its agents.

The colonists were, with certain exceptions, to be governed by their own laws, and be exempt from

all duties on articles of exportation, and also on the importation of all sorts of provisions, arms for hunting game, agricultural instruments, books, and materials, for building houses. The company was to have the preference in the construction of all the roads and canals which the state government might deem it advisable to make in the district, and in collecting the established tolls; and the Custom House, existing at Isabel, should be removed to Saint Thomas.

By perusing the translations of the agreements, it will be seen that all the articles are most favourable to the state of Guatemala, and it would therefore appear that the object of the Belgians must have been to get possession of the district on any terms, hoping afterwards to be able to retain it by negotiation or force, and raise it to a colony which would give an outlet to their manufactures and surplus population.

Though the company was got up under the patronage of the King of the Belgians, the agreement is said to have been signed without the previous approbation of his government, which, most justly, disapproved of many parts of it. The company complied with the conditions for the first two years; but the port of Saint Thomas, like all parts of the N. E. coast, having proved very fatal to new comers, and many of the emigrants having died, and others returned with bad accounts of the settlement, they have found it difficult to induce more to emigrate; and, though the Belgian government have supported the company with the grant of 1,000,000 of francs, it is to be feared that the settlement will share the

fate of the one attempted by the British in 1836 (called Abbotsville), and be finally abandoned. The Belgian government is said this year to have offered 2,000,000 of dollars for the absolute purchase of the district; which, however, the Guatemala government refused to cede in sovereignty on any terms.

Had the company secured a tract of country in the interior, where the climate is cool and healthy, with a road to the nearest port, they might have succeeded; but it was very foolish to suppose that natives of the north of Europe could, without previous preparation, be enabled to live and labour under the burning sun of tropical America.

The aggregate value of the exports of Central America has certainly declined since the revolution, as the increase in the single state of Costa Rica is not nearly equivalent to the falling off in the rest, consequently the gross value of the imports must be supposed to be less; though from the value of most articles being less than a fifth of what they were sold for under the Spanish government, the actual amount of goods introduced from abroad, and consumed by the people, is much greater.

As no returns of the amount of imports are published by the Custom House, an approximation to their nature and value can only be made; but as they must be all paid for by a corresponding exportation of produce or money, their value may be pretty nearly calculated by means of this knowledge.

Commencing with the state of Guatemala, the imports, from England and the British colony of Belize, consist of white, grey, and printed calicoes,

broad cloth, and other woollen fabrics, ironmongery, and cutlery, and a very small quantity of fancy goods.

Formerly, nearly all the British trade passed through Belize, but latterly the dealers finding it so much more to their interest to have a direct communication with England, all the most respectable have at present their London and Liverpool correspondents; only the smallest and poorest dealers, who cannot afford to make a remittance to England, continue to import on credit from Belize, as, by so doing, they obtain a twelvemonths' credit on their purchases, instead of being forced to send cash or produce, as must generally be done by those who import direct. Three or four British ships, chartered in England, annually visit Estapa, the port of Guatemala, on the Pacific; but by far the greater part of the imports, and all the valuable goods of easy carriage, are sent to Belize by the mahogany ships, and transhipped from thence to Isabel, in the state of Guatemala, by small vessels which can enter that port.

Some vessels have lately come to the new port of Saint Thomas, but, as there is not even a mule track through the forest yet cleared, to that port, the carriage of goods to Guatemala is next to impossible. Were a road made, it would probably become the only port of introduction into this state, as vessels of all sizes can at all times enter it, and lie in perfect safety, and it is only a few leagues more distant from the capital than Isabel.

The trade of Guatemala with England and Belize, certainly forms more than a moiety of its entire

commerce. The next in importance is the trade with Spain, from which five or six vessels annually land cargoes at Istapaza, the bulky nature and small value of the imports (which consist of Spanish brandy, wines of low quality, oil for salad, Biscay iron and steel, paper, and some few manufactured goods of Valencia) not admitting the payment of freight from Belize, and carriage from Isabel.

Several small United States' vessels annually call at Isabel, bringing coarse grey calicoes, and a few trifling manufactures and toys.

Two or three French vessels, also, annually arrive at Belize with cargoes for Guatemala, consisting of silk, shawls, muslins, ribands, fancy hosiery, gloves, perfumery, and toys.

The only export from the state is cochineal, of which 9037 bales of 150 lbs. each have been exported this year (1846), the average value in Guatemala being six and a half reals (equal to three shillings and three pence sterling) per lb., thus making the value of the exports of the year 211,804*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* sterling, which may be safely assumed as nearly the entire value of the imports from foreign countries, though it must somewhat vary according to the profit or loss made upon the cochineal, and must be slightly increased, as a small amount of specie is annually sent to Belize; but as this is all smuggled, to avoid the export duty of 4 per cent., the amount can only be guessed at, and does not, it is said, exceed 50,000 or 60,000 dollars in the year.

A portion of the British piece-goods are not consumed in the state, being smuggled into Mexico, through the adjoining province of the Altos, partly

by natives, and partly by Mexicans, who bring gold and silver to purchase them in Guatemela; and, owing to the extravagant duties and frequent prohibitions of the Mexican tariff, the business is sufficiently profitable when only the moderate duties of Central America are paid. It is difficult to ascertain the amount of this trade, but, from the large amount of Mexican money circulating in the state, which can only be obtained by this traffic, it must be considerable.

Guatemala imports a great part of the cocoa consumed in the state from Soconesco, formerly a part of Central America, but six years ago annexed to South America.

About 100,000 dollars, principally in gold coin, are annually received from Costa Rica for the purchase of woollen clothing, made in the Altos, which is generally worn in Costa Rica; the money is always personally brought by the natives of that state, who return with the woollen manufactures which they retail to their countrymen.

All the sugar consumed in Guatemala is imported from the neighbourhood of Santa Ana and Ahnachapan, in the state of San Salvador, and, since the separation of the states, is principally paid for in money.

For some years after the declaration of independence the trade of the state of San Salvador was equal, if not superior, to any state of the republic, the indigo, then almost the only produce which was imported, being nearly all produced in that state; but, since 1825 it has gradually diminished, and is now very trifling indeed.

The imports are received partly from the southern republics at the ports of the Union and Acajantla (the former being the port of San Miguel, and the latter that of Sonsonate), and partly from Belize, viâ Omoa, being carried on mules through the state of Honduras; but, as since the separation of the states the latter route involves the payment of double duties, it is but little used. About a dozen vessels from South America annually visit the Union. San Miguel, of which it is the port, has three annual fairs, namely, on the 21st of November, 18th of February, and 8th of May, that in November being much the largest; and near one of these periods vessels generally arrive, bringing British, French, and North-American manufactures, from Valparaiso and Callao, and cocao and hats from Guaquil. Messrs. Forster and Manning, and Mr. Bridge, British merchants resident in Chinendega, in the state of Nicaragua, have of late years brought goods direct from England and the United States of North America, which are in a great measure superseding the second-hand importations from Chili and Peru.

Formerly, about a million of dollars used to change hands in San Miguel at the November fair, and about half as much at the two other fairs taken together; but the continued disturbances of which San Salvador has been the centre, combined with the depreciation of the price of indigo, has sadly reduced the trade, so that not above 100,000 dollars yearly change hands in all the fairs of San Miguel; while the crop of indigo, the only article for exportation with the exception of a few hides, did not, in 1846, exceed 1200 to 1500 bales, worth, perhaps, on an average,

$4\frac{1}{2}$ reals (two shillings and threepence) per lb. in San Miguel. No revival in the trade can, therefore, be looked for, as imports, if much exceeding the exports, cannot be paid for without draining the state of all its gold and silver.

The trade of Sonsonate, by its port of Acajantla, which is five leagues distant, has always been much smaller than that of San Miguel. It consists of some small importations from South America, and a French vessel which annually comes, consigned to Don Victor Lenouvel, a native of France, who transacts nearly all the foreign trade of the place, which may amount to 50,000 or 60,000 dollars a-year, the exports consisting of a small portion of the indigo crop, balsam of Peru, a few hides, and, occasionally, a small quantity of chancaca sugar, sent to Chili. The only other articles exported from this state are sugar for the supply of Guatemala, sent there by mules from Santa Ana and Ahnachapan, a small quantity of iron manufactured at Patapa, and sent to the same place, and a few bales of the lowest quality of indigo for the manufacturers of the Altos.

Honduras has always been considered the poorest state of Central America, and the late continued civil wars have very nearly put an end to the working of the mines, the only riches which it possessed. The trade is almost entirely carried on with the British settlement of Belize, with the exception of a small intercourse with the United States of North America. The exports consist of mahogany, about 30,000 hides, worth five shillings each, and sarsaparilla, which are exported from the ports of Trujillo

and Omoa, and paid for in British and North American manufactures. One cargo was, three years ago, imported from Chili at San Lorenzo, the port of the S.W. side, by the only vessel that ever entered that port; but a small quantity of goods, principally Guayaquil cocoa and hats, are sent to it from the Union, the passage from which is made in eight hours by the native canoes, called bougoes, the water being always perfectly smooth, as both ports are in the same land-locked bay.

Nicaragua was formerly the richest state in productions next to San Salvador, but is now the most wretched and impoverished of all; this has been brought about by the never-ceasing revolutions, which have entirely demoralised the population, and made life and property even more insecure than in any of the other states. For some years the great export was Brazil wood, of which as much as 10,000 tons were shipped to Europe in one year, the effect of which, however, was to reduce the price so low as hardly to pay freight, and ruin all the speculators in the article. At present about 500 or 600 tons are annually shipped, vessels often taking in a small quantity for tonnage at Realejo, and proceeding to Punta Arenas to fill up with coffee.

The other articles of export are, a few bales of indigo, and about 30,000 hides, of which about 12,000 are shipped from Realejo, the port of the Pacific, and the remainder from St. John, on the river of that name, the port of the Atlantic, but now claimed by the British government on behalf of the Moschito Indians. Nearly all the trade of Realejo is carried on by three English merchants, who possess

two fine vessels, navigated under the North American flag (having found that they can be sailed much cheaper than British vessels), and annually import two cargoes of British and North American manufactures, worth about 100,000 dollars each, which they sell principally in Chinendega and Leon, though they send a portion to Punta Arenas and the Union.

Granada, of which St. John is the port, carries on a trade with England, France, and North America, which, though once of some consideration, is now very insignificant, and annually decreasing. Cocoa of very excellent quality, but inferior to that of Soconosco, and the S.W. coast of Guatemala, is produced in the vicinity of Granada, whence it is sent to Honduras and San Salvador, to the extent of 200 to 300 bales, of 150 lbs. each in the year. Tobacco is a government monopoly, and is imported from Costa Rica, being purchased at from two to three reals per lb., and afterwards retailed at from four to five reals by the holders of the monopoly.

The monopoly is now in the hands of Messrs. Manning and Glenton, who took it in lieu of their claims against the Nicaragua government to the extent of about 40,000 dollars, on account of which the state was blockaded for nine months by a British ship-of-war; and they are understood to be gaining more than 100 per cent. by their bargain.

The trade of Costa Rica, as I have before stated, has nearly all sprung up within the last twelve years, the only production previously being that from the gold mines of Aguacate, tobacco, and a small quantity of Chancaca sugar. The exports now consist of

upwards of 70,000 quintals of coffee, worth seven and a half dollars in the port of Punta Arenas, which is paid for partly in gold brought from Chili, in British and French manufactures brought from the same place, and in British, North American, Spanish, and French produce and manufactures, brought direct from those countries.

Two large British vessels annually arrive at Punta Arenas, bringing cargoes for two German merchants settled in San José, and return laden with coffee. Their import cargoes consist of all sorts of British manufactures, but principally white and printed cotton goods.

Two or three Spanish vessels, generally, in the year, visit this and the other ports of Central America, with the same description of goods as are imported to Guatemala; and some North American, French, and Hambro' vessels have also of late visited Punta Arenas, bringing the manufactures of their respective countries, and taking cargoes of coffee in return. The consumption of British goods, however, greatly exceeds that of all the others jointly, and is not a little assisted by the preference given in England to Costa Rica coffee, and the lower duty at which it is admitted, as the produce of free labour.

Goods, to the value of a few thousand dollars, are also imported into this state by Matina, the port of the N.E. side; but the extreme badness of the port, and the almost impassable state of the roads, prevent the trade from being carried to any extent.

Costa Rica supplies the state of Nicaragua with tobacco for the government monopoly, and the article is also monopolised by the government of the state,

which alone is permitted to purchase it from the growers, and sell it for the consumption of the state, and the supply of Nicaragua.

Trade is perfectly free in all the states of Central America, and foreigners possess all the privileges enjoyed by the natives, with the additional advantage of not being obliged to contribute to the forced loans exacted of all classes by the state governments; a practice which is now fortunately rarely adopted. The governments have been forced to refund the whole amount, with interest, to British subjects and French citizens, and are now obliged to except them when such exactions are made, though Spaniards, and other nations, have no such exemption.

The whole commerce of Central America is of an exceedingly petty character, and all the importers, without a single exception, have retail shops, without which, I am informed, they could not make the trade answer. Long credits are given to the petty dealers, who buy second-hand of the importers; and cash is most generally advanced to the growers of cochineal and indigo, and to the poorer classes of coffee-growers, six months before the crop time, to enable them to work their estates and get in their crops, they binding themselves to deliver the whole, or a part of the produce, to the party advancing the money. The price fixed is generally about twenty-five per cent. below the current rate of the last season. This advance is called a habilitation, and, in the payment, is legally preferred to all debts whatever; although, as may be expected in a country where there are no means of enforcing the laws, the punctual fulfilment of this,

and all other engagements, depends principally on the character of the parties contracting them.

The Belize merchants complain greatly of the dishonesty of the traders, especially those of Guatemala and San Miguel, with whom alone they have transacted business to any amount; but in this they appear only to have their own reckless conduct to blame, having given credit to nearly every person who asked it, without knowing almost any thing of their means or character, and having no more security than their word that they were the persons represented. To me it is more surprising that, in a country where there are, in fact, no available laws, and where all parties have such facility for making away with their property without the possibility of its being recovered, or the act being punished, the great majority should have paid honestly, the defaulters generally being miserable wretches who have been ruined by the exactions of government, or, occasionally, who have gambled away all their property.

I feel certain that in a British colony the losses to parties acting similarly would have been much greater, in spite of the severe, and, in some cases, tyrannical laws which have been enacted and enforced in most of them.

No Central American traders keep any regular books, and generally have only an obscure notion of the amount of their assets and liabilities, nor do they think of meeting them with any regularity, a few days', or even weeks', delay in making a payment being considered of no importance; and, where the parties are unwilling to pay, it is utterly useless to resort to legal measures, as in such cases all their property

uniformly disappears, without their being compelled to give any account of it, and, as no books are kept, it is, of course, impossible to move a step. Some parties have resorted to the only efficient method of recovering from a debtor unwilling to pay, viz. threatening his life; and this has, in many instances, been successful in Guatemala after all other means have failed. There are two British houses in Guatemala, who do a pretty good share of the import trade, but inferior to that transacted by several Spaniards; also three French, as many Germans, and four Italians, who do a petty business, the principal trade being in the hands of five Spanish houses, who have correspondents in England, France, and Spain. In San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, nearly all the imports are made by foreigners, principally English and French, the natives being afraid to appear to transact a large business on account of the exactions made by the state governments from all who they think have the means of paying. In Costa Rica the principal trade is in the hands of two German and two Spanish merchants, but, as the government of that state is of a more respectable character, and has not raised any forced contributions for many years, the natives are also enabled to engage in trade without fear; and, as they are noted for their shrewdness and talent in making a bargain, being, in the other states, called the Jews of Central America, the foreigners are not enabled, as in the other states, to make most usurious profits by some bargains; but they have the advantage of being much more secure of their profits, and the Costa

Ricans are very punctual in their payments, and bankruptcy is almost unheard of.

The ordinary revenue in all the states of Central America is derived from duties on imports, a duty of five per cent. on the transfer of real property, a monopoly of the sale of spirits, and also of tobacco, in the states of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which the governments of San Salvador and Guatemala are now also proposing to establish. The state of Honduras derives part of its revenue from the sale of mahogany to the Belize merchants, and from a very injurious custom of issuing debased copper money.

The federal tariff, established by the government of the republic of Central America in 1824, and which is still adhered to by all the states except Costa Rica, fixed a duty of 20 per cent. on all imports, but the valuation which was then made has not been altered, though the prices of many articles have fallen 50 per cent., so that it is in many cases equal to a real duty of 40 per cent.; for example, iron of all sorts is valued at 6 dollars per 100 lbs., and brandy of all sorts at 20 dollars a keg of 16 gallons; but on cotton and silk goods the value is more justly taken, the invoice being generally exhibited, and if any doubt arises the packages are opened and examined, which, however, is very rarely done. According to the regulations, till lately in force in Guatemala, one-third of the duties could be paid in government paper; namely, the acknowledgments given to the payers of forced loans, which could generally be purchased at from 50 to 60 per cent. discount. Honduras receives one-half in government paper, which, however, is never at so heavy a dis-

count, and San Salvador and Nicaragua have, up to the time of the last revolution, received two-thirds of the amount in government paper, which could generally be purchased at 80 per cent. discount, and the existing governments promise again to do so as soon as the present pressing engagements are relieved. Costa Rica alone has no debt, and therefore requires to make no laws for taking up her paper. Besides the foregoing indulgences, a term of credit of three months is always given for paying the duties if they amount to 500 dollars, and from three to six months for larger sums, from the day the goods are removed from the government warehouse. A charge of four reals per 100 lbs. weight is made for warehouse rent, whether the goods are warehoused or not, and whatever time they remain in bond.

Though the duties are certainly far from oppressive, smuggling is of very common occurrence, and, though when discovered it is by law punished by the confiscation of the goods, if clearly proved to be designed, and by double duties if it can be passed off as a mistake; it is, in fact, always commuted for a small fine, or more frequently hushed up by a bribe. But the safest and most general method of smuggling, or, as the natives term it, the most honourable, is to agree with the collector of customs for a part, generally a half, of the duties, the greater part of which he himself of course retains, giving permits for the goods in the usual manner, and accounting to the government as he thinks proper.

Since the separation of the states, each exacts full duties on all merchandise, even if they have been paid in one of the other states; and though the

British and French consuls have protested strongly against it, on the principle that no state had a right singly to rescind the laws made by the universal consent of the whole (it being enacted by the federal tariff that merchandise, having paid duty in one state, should pass freely through the rest), they have not as yet induced the states to leave off the exaction, or return the amount so paid since their separation, although such restitution will, as I am informed by H. B. M. consul, be certainly enforced in the case of British subjects. The custom is most inconvenient, and completely paralyses the internal trade; and as some of the states have no convenient ports on the Pacific, and others none at all on the Atlantic, it is of course exceedingly injurious to the interests of them all, and if continued will leave them in the same inconvenient situation as the petty states of Germany, before the Custom's Union was established.

From no statement of the revenue of any state being ever published, it is very difficult to tell its exact amount; the following is the nearest approximation I can make, from the information given me by the ministers and collectors of the different states:—

	Dollars.
Guatemala, including the Altos	260,000
State of San Salvador	127,000
Honduras (exclusive of copper money issues)	72,000
Nicaragua	50,000
Costa Rica (exclusive of duty on coffee, applied to the roads)	87,000

The finances of all the states except Costa Rica, are almost always in the most disorganised condition, the expenditure at all times exceeding the ordinary

revenue; and, as their credit is sunk to the lowest ebb, their only means of making up the deficiency is by forced loans, or money taken up on the most usurious and ruinous terms. About eighteen months ago the government of Guatemala borrowed 50,000 dollars of the two British houses, to be repaid out of the customs' duties as fast as they were collected, with the addition of 50 per cent; but after repaying about half the amount, the mock legislature made a law authorising the government to resume the Custom-House duties, postponing the payment of the loan for an indefinite period; however, after sundry threatening letters from the British consul, they have, it appears, paid the balance of this debt; and taking into account the date of the former payment, these merchants have made more than 50 per cent. per annum by their advance. Still, ruinous as this interest undoubtedly was, and ruinous as it must be to any government or individual paying it, no Spaniard or native would advance money to government even on these, or indeed on any terms, being almost certain that they would never be repaid, as has happened to some merchants in Guatemala, who made a similar advance some years before, and have no prospect of being repaid, though the British merchants who negotiated the loan long afterwards have received their money.

The government of San Salvador, on a late occasion, paid 5 per cent. per month to a Frenchman of the name of Casamayor, and no person will now lend them money on any terms. Some years ago the Honduras government adopted the ruinous scheme of issuing a debased copper currency, the real value

of the metal being about a seventh of the amount for which it passes current; but having cost the government one-fifth of its nominal value, being bought at an extravagant price, this money is issued by government in their payment, but is not received in settlement of duties which must be paid in gold or silver. This debased money has already fallen to a third of its nominal value; and as there is not the least hope that such a government will ever redeem it, it must soon be depreciated to its real value; at present the issue of it is, perhaps, a more polite method of robbery than that practised in the other states, though in the end it must prove even more destructive to commerce and prosperity.

The government of Nicaragua is in the most wretched state of all; the tobacco monopoly, and the Custom-House at Realejo, being mortgaged for the claims of British subjects against the government. On a late occasion, Mr. Forster, the British vice-consul, states that they could not raise twenty-five dollars to pay the troops they wished to send against a band of robbers and assassins. In consequence of this they refused to march, so that the assassins were left to plunder whom they pleased, without any interruption whatever; and, in fact, they robbed and put to death five most respectable individuals in their houses in open day.

The current money of Central America, with the exception of Honduras, is nearly the same as the Spaniards left it, and, as all the southern republics in pretending to improve it have only robbed the public by issuing a debased currency, it is fortunate that they have left it alone. It consists principally of

pieces of silver rudely cut and stamped, of the value of from one half to four reals; it is rather finer than the current hard dollars, but from long use the coin, especially the smaller pieces, have lost a great part of their weight; and I find from examination that one with another they may be said to have lost 20 per cent., eight reals of the current money being one-fifth lighter than a new hard dollar, which passes for the same value. It is also most embarrassing for a stranger to count any large amount, or even distinguish the different values. But even this state of the currency is preferable to that of New Granada, Equador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chili, where the governments have uniformly deducted about 50 per cent. either in the weight or fineness of their last coinages of small silver money, hard dollars being worth a considerable premium in all these countries. All the coins of Mexico pass current in Central America, and, next to the cut silver, form the bulk of the circulating medium; but only the gold ounces and hard dollars of the southern republics are received. The gold ounce (improperly called doubloon in English) weighs 317 grains, and should be exactly 21 carats fine. Those of Mexico and Central America, and the old republic of Colombia, are said to be pretty exactly of that fineness, but many of those lately coined by the southern republics have been depreciated; the ounce passes for sixteen dollars in Guatemala and San Salvador, and for seventeen in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, but current silver and hard dollars are generally worth 6 per cent. premium in the latter states, which makes it of actually the same value in them all.

It is much to be regretted that the government of Costa Rica, so much superior to that of the other states in most other respects, has lately given the bad example of coining a depreciated small silver money; which is not received except in that state, all the natives of Central America being excellent judges of the purity of the precious metals.

Central America, in imitation of all the American governments (Bolivia only excepted), has contracted a debt in London; having, in 1826, empowered Messrs. Barclay, Herring, & Co. to contract a loan of 7,000,000 of dollars. But fortunately for the British public, Messrs. B. H. & Co. could not succeed in negotiating more than 816,500 dollars, or 163,300*l.* sterling, of which it appears, that the Central American government, owing to the failure of their agents, did not receive quite one half, though of course responsible for the whole amount. Messrs. Reid, Irving, & Co., after the stoppage of Messrs. Barclay, Herring, & Co., were appointed agents for the republic, and paid about two years' interest of the debt; but the government neither attempted to reimburse them nor make any provision for the future payment of the interest, either during the existence of the federal government or after its dissolution. But in 1838 the state of Costa Rica, induced by the strong representations of H. B. M. consul-general, took upon itself the liquidation of the proportion of the national debt assigned to it, namely, one twelfth of the whole amount, with interest; and for that purpose delivered 2,000 bales of tobacco to Mr. Forster, the British vice-consul, in Nicaragua, but the proceeds of the article which was sold in Nicaragua

being invested in indigo for remittance to England, did not, from the state of the markets, realise the anticipated amount, netting only 16,210*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*, instead of 26,765*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, the amount with interest due by Costa Rica as their share of the debt. The English creditors, glad no doubt to recover any part of what appeared entirely lost, decided on accepting the amount netted in full of their claims against Costa Rica, so that the state is entirely free from debt; and I make no doubt that the British creditors would be most happy to compound the rest of their claims against Central America on similar terms. I believe that none of the other states except Honduras, have ever made a proposal for discharging any part of the debt; and it is most probable that, small as is the amount for a nation consisting of 2,000,000 of inhabitants, and possessing one of the most fertile territories in the world, no effectual attempt will be made to discharge their liabilities, unless the British government should consider themselves entitled to use compulsory measures in exacting payment, which as yet they have not thought proper to do in similar circumstances with any government.

Central America, as might be expected from its position, contains a greater number of excellent ports than any other continental country of the same size. About two days' sail from the British settlement of Belize is the port of Isabel, at present the principal medium of the foreign trade with the state of Guatemala. Isabel is naturally most beautifully situated for a port, being upon a lake about thirty miles long, from which a river flows into the ocean. The town is about twelve leagues from the sea. The depth

of water in the lake and river is not less than four fathoms, but the latter, unfortunately, possesses a mud bar at the mouth, which prevents the entrance of vessels drawing more than six to eight feet of water; but the bank is said to be of very limited extent, and of materials which could very easily be removed by the most ordinary dredging machine, so as to admit large vessels. Were this done, Isabel would be one of the finest ports in the world. At present the trade is principally carried on by small coasting vessels, which convey the imports from, and the exports to Belize, through which nearly all the trade passes, the only vessels which arrive direct being some small craft from the United States of North America. Very near the mouth of lake Isabel is the most excellent port of St. Thomas, where the Belgians have established their settlement, and which would, of course, become the only outlet for the trade of the state were the agreements of the Belgian commissioners carried into effect; but of this there appears (as I have before stated) to be little chance at present.

St. Thomas is well sheltered from all wind, of easy ingress and egress, and has every natural facility for forming wharfs, quays, etc., and appears to be a most excellent situation for the formation of a port. The coast possessed by Guatemala on the N. E. is of small extent, though more than sufficient for any useful purpose at present, and possessing two excellent ports. About thirty leagues east by north is the port of Omoa in Honduras, and about sixty leagues further in the same direction, that of Trujillo, in the same state; through these two ports the trade of the

state passes in about equal proportions. They possess abundant natural advantages, being both very safe and accessible at all times. Few vessels, however, visit them direct from Europe, the principal trade being with Belize, and the United States of North America.

The Mosquito coast intervenes between Trujillo and San Juan of Nicaragua. It is a large tract of country covered with dense forests; and the inhabitants are a mixture of negroes and Indians, nominally under the protection of Great Britain.

The port of San Juan del Norte is situated on the river of that name, about twenty leagues from its mouth. Ships of all sizes can ascend to it with facility, and the port is large, safe, and well situated for the entrepôt of the trade of the states of Nicaragua and Costa Rica; but, owing to the separation of the government, it possesses none of the trade of the latter. It supplies the cities of Granada and Nicaragua, and the smaller towns on that side of the state.

The British have, for some years past, claimed this port on behalf of the Mosquito Indians, but do not appear inclined to enforce the claim. The only other port on the N. E. coast worth noting is that of Matina, in Costa Rica, which is merely a creek for boats, vessels having to lie in an open roadstead. It formerly had some little trade (principally contraband) with Jamaica, but this is now understood to be nearly at an end. The road from it to San José is almost impassable, and its situation is said to render it most pestiferous, and very fatal to strangers and natives of the cooler districts.

Commencing at the most northernly part of the S. W. coast, the first of the ports upon the Pacific is Jocos, which is the only place in the province of the Altos ever visited by vessels. It is an open roadstead, where a landing is always effected with some difficulty, on account of the continued heavy surf breaking upon the shore. It has only been visited by two or three small vessels, and, since the annexation of the province to the state of Guatemala, goods cannot be landed there but by special license from the government.

Iztapa, the port of Guatemala, on the Pacific, is little better than the foregoing: it is twenty-five leagues from the capital of that state, and the country is of such a nature that a passable road for carts might be made at little expense; though there is no probability of its being attempted under the present government. Five or six vessels visit Iztapa in the course of the year, and bulky goods, which will not bear the expense of carriage from Isabel, are sent there. It is probable that, were it in the hands of an enlightened government, a breakwater might be made to improve the port; but landing a cargo at present is dangerous, and exceedingly tedious and laborious.

About forty leagues to the eastward is the port of Acajantla, in the state of San Salvador, which is much superior to the foregoing, being sheltered from all winds except S. W. Still there is always a heavy swell upon the beach, and the entire absence of a wharf, makes landing somewhat difficult. Five or six vessels generally visit this port in the year. Twenty leagues further along the coast is the roadstead of

Libertad, which is in all respects inferior to Acajantla, but has been occasionally made use of for embarking and disembarking bulky goods, as it is the nearest point along the coast to the city of San Salvador, from which it is only twelve leagues distant.

Eight leagues further to the eastward is the bay of Conchagua, near the head of which, on the west side is the port of the Union, which I have already described pretty fully, and which is by far the best in the state of San Salvador.

On the opposite side of the bay, nearer the entrance, is the port of San Lorenzo, the only one possessed by the state of Honduras on the Pacific coast. The port is safe and convenient, and of easy access; but, as nearly all the commerce of this state is carried on by the Atlantic coast, it is little attended to, only one vessel having entered it, for the temptation of admitting her cargo duty free, offered as a premium to the first vessel visiting the port. Some canoe-loads of merchandise, principally Guayaquil cocoa, are annually sent to it from the Union.

A few leagues eastward of the entrance of Conchagua bay, is the port of Realejo, in the state of Nicaragua, which I have already described. It can hardly be surpassed by any in the world. It commands about half the trade of the state. About fifty leagues further to the eastward is the port of San Juan del Sur, to which place it was proposed to bring the canal, connecting the two oceans, though Realejo would appear to be much preferable in most respects. The gulf of Papagaya, where the port is situated, is very difficult to enter with a sailing vessel for five months in the year, during which a strong

wind continually blows off the land. The port has, I understand, only been entered by one sailing-vessel.

Along the coast of Nicoya there are, doubtless, many creeks which would form good ports, but the district contains so few inhabitants that no person has thought it worth examining with that object.

The only other port at present made use of on this coast is Punta Arenas, in Costa Rica, regarding which I have before said sufficient in my account of that state. At present it engrosses nearly all the trade; but it is to be hoped that a better situation may shortly be discovered, as there are, probably, many in the vicinity preferable to the present port.

The rivers of central America are very numerous, but, as might be anticipated (from the nature of the country), small, and none of them at present available for the navigation of vessels of any size, except St. John, in Nicaragua, which flows into the Atlantic, and the Lempa, in San Salvador, which flows into the Pacific. Unfortunately, the latter has a very bad bar at the mouth, over which vessels drawing more than six feet of water cannot pass. As it is, however, formed of mud brought down by the river, it could be easily removed; and, if this were done, the river would afford not only an excellent port, but an inland navigation of twenty leagues for large vessels in the very heart of the state. Of this, however, there is not the least hope at present.

Many other rivers could easily be rendered navigable with a little expense; as the river of Montagua, which the commissioners of the Belgian company have agreed to clear; the river Dulce, near the same part; the river at Iztapa, and several others.

But these improvements could only be expected to take place under a government of a very different character from any which at present rules in Spanish America.

The inland lakes are numerous, the principal being those of Nicaragua or Granada, and those of Managua or Leon, in the state of Nicaragua; Panajachel, Solalo, and Amatitlan, in the state of Guatemala; Cajutepeke, in the state of San Salvador; and some others. The first named of these lakes, from which the river St. John flows, and through which the projected canal to connect the two oceans should pass, is about 120 miles in length, and 50 in average width, and contains a number of islands. It is in some parts upwards of 100 fathoms deep: the soil on its banks is rich, and capable of producing all sorts of tropical produce, besides mahogany, cedar, and Brazil wood, which grow naturally in great abundance upon its banks. The lake of Leon is about forty miles long, and twenty-five broad, and is connected with the lake of Nicaragua by a river, which flows from it into the latter. This river could be rendered navigable for small vessels merely by slightly cleaning its bed; but, were it desired to bring the grand canal through these two lakes to the harbour of Realejo, it would most probably be necessary to carry it alongside, instead of attempting to deepen the connecting river. The banks of this lake are fertile, like those of Nicaragua, but at present only possess some small patches of cultivation. The scenery surrounding the lakes of Panajachel, Solola, and Cajutepeke is very beautiful and magnificent, but as they can never serve for the purpose of an

extended navigation, or indeed any further than for communication between the villages on their banks, they do not merit particular notice in a cursory view of the geography of the country. All the rivers and lakes abound with fish, but the variety is small, and they are all much inferior to the salmon and trout. The most common sort is called mojaro, a small tasteless fish, generally caught with nets, but also with worms and flies.

CHAP. IX.

POPULATION. — STATE OF EDUCATION. — RELIGION AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

THE native population of Central America may be said to consist of six distinct races, which, however, have been intermixed to so great an extent, that their derivation cannot often be traced.

1st. May be classed the white descendants of Spanish colonists.

2nd. The mestizo, descendants of Spaniards and Indians.

3rd. The mulatto, descendants of Spaniards and negroes.

4th. The zambo, descendants of Indians and negroes.

5th. The native, or indigenous Indian.

6th. The African negro.

In all the states except Costa Rica, the second and fifth classes are much the most numerous. The state of Guatemala is said to contain about a million of inhabitants, the Indians of whom probably amount to 800,000, the mestizoes to 150,000. The whites in New and Old Guatemala may amount to four or five thousand; but in other parts of the state not above twenty or thirty will be found in the largest towns, and I do not suppose that their total number exceeds seven or eight thousand.

The natives of negro blood are principally found on the N. E. coast, and in Amatitlan. They are the descendants of the slaves kept by the Jesuits, and are rarely to be met with in any part of the state. The pure negroes do not amount to so many as the whites, the remainder of the population being mulattoes and zamboes.

In San Salvador, supposed to contain 350,000 inhabitants, the number of whites does not appear to exceed three or four thousand, as they are only found in the principal towns of the state; of the rest, about two-thirds would appear to be mestizoes and indigenous Indians, the number of the other classes being very trifling. Honduras is said to contain a population of 250,000, of these there may be from four to five thousand whites, and twenty to thirty thousand negroes, zamboes, and mulattoes, on the N. E. coast only, the remainder consisting of about one-half mestizoes, and one-half indigenous Indians.

In Nicaragua, the population of which is estimated at 300,000, there may be two or three thousand whites, and five or six thousand of negro blood in the ports; of the remaining population, about a third are mestizoes, and two-thirds indigenous Indians.

In Costa Rica, the population of which is rated at 85,000, at least 70,000 are whites, the remainder consisting of a few negroes near the port of Matina, on the N. E. coast, and mestizoes and their descendants who have come from the other states; I have not noticed a single pure Indian.

Of the foreigners, the natives of Spain are by far the most numerous, being generally emigrants from Andalusia and Murcia, either of the lower classes, or

desperate adventurers who have been ruined in their own country and come to Central America, to push their fortunes in any manner. Unfortunately, they form the great bulk of the commercial class excepting the petty dealers, and have a character decidedly worse in all respects, than the same class among the natives. I do not think there are a dozen English in all Central America; there may be thirty or forty French, and as many Germans, and twenty or thirty of all other foreigners, excepting the Belgians, who, since the formation of the colony of St. Thomas, are much more numerous in the state of Guatemala.

The ignorance, vice, and superstition prevailing in Central America, are probably hardly to be equalled in any other part of the world, unless it may be in the interior of Africa or the East India islands. In the towns, not one in ten can read or write, and in many parts of the country, not one in a thousand. In many villages containing some thousand inhabitants, no person is to be found who can read, and, when a traveller is compelled to show his passport to the alcalde, who is the first civil and criminal judge, he is generally requested to read it. Morality is at the lowest ebb among all classes, especially the whites and creoles; indeed, I could never find, that among them any disgrace was attached to any sort of crime except petty larceny. Murder, perjury, forgery, and swindling of all sorts are considered as quite venial.

The priests are, for the most part, blind leaders of the blind; and the better educated merely consider themselves as actors, whose business it is to extort

money by acting the part which will please the people. Forms and religious parade are carefully kept up, but no one thinks of inculcating private morality or even decency. The marriage ceremony is, also, as might be expected, considered merely as a form to keep up public decency, and both man and wife act in private as they please.

I never have found any native of Central America, who would admit that there could be any vice in lying; and when one has succeeded in cheating another, however gross and infamous the fraud may be, the natives will only remark, "*Que hombre vivo*" (what a clever fellow). All classes are addicted to gambling, and far more money changes hands in this manner than in commerce or any legitimate business. Nearly all the Guatemala merchants, who are the only ones possessed of any capital, have commenced their career with some rascality. One of the richest of them was some years ago, when in bad circumstances, sent to look after a quantity of very valuable goods which had been abandoned by the carriers in some revolutionary panic; but, instead of restoring the goods to their owner, he altered the marks and so mixed them together, that when they came to Guatemala they could not be identified; there he managed to keep the greater part, by selling which he at once accumulated a good capital for commencing business; and being a shrewd dealer, and above all, a successful gambler, he has realised what is in Central America a large fortune, and he is courted by all the Belize merchants. Concubinage is common among all possessed of any wealth; nor is this, as in other

countries, done secretly, if at all; but even wives will publicly speak of their husbands' mistresses, and express their approbation and disapprobation of their taste.

Nearly all the purchases and sales are conducted by women, who among the lower classes plant the maize for the family, make the tortilias carry the surplus produce to market, and bring back the proceeds; while the men are lying all day in their hammocks, or dosing under the shade of a tree. I only speak of the lower and middle classes, as the women of the higher ranks are as depraved and indolent as the men.

The character of the indigenous Indians is very various in different parts of the country. Some of their villages, such as the Ravinal, and many others of smaller extent, are inhabited by a very industrious class of natives, who form the best workmen in the state of Guatemala, their dress being neat and clean, and their conduct humble and courteous; while in others, the people are lazy and insolent, and go entirely naked, with the exception of a cloth round the middle. They are all very shrewd in their dealings, and their promises may much more safely be trusted to than those of the white and mixed breeds. The greater part are continually intoxicated whenever they have the means of being so, and make a habit of drinking on the Sunday all they have gained in the week, without ever saving any thing to take home to their villages. To this, however, the Indians of the Ravinal, and some other places, are an exception; they will walk fifty and sixty leagues to Amatitlan and Old Guatemala to seek work, and remain

a month or two, spending almost nothing upon their food, but when returning home they will purchase some article of dress, and take the rest of their gains to spend in their native village; they are noted for their honesty and veracity, and are said to be very moral in their private lives.

The Indians of the Altos are, also, generally an industrious class, and by them is spun nearly all the clothing used by the lower and middle classes of Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and all the temperate parts of Central America.

I have always found the Indians of the state of San Salvador most civil and obliging, and though very ignorant and superstitious, they are without many of the vices of the mixed breeds; the same applies to the Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua. But as the Indians of the two latter states have had less intercourse with strangers, they are in many parts in a more savage state, and are almost entirely directed by the priests, who make them conform to the unmeaning ceremonies of the Church of Rome, and exact a large proportion of their little gains, without attempting to teach them the true spirit of the Christian religion, or in the least improving their education or morality.

As I mentioned, when speaking of Amatitlan, the mulattoes of that place are in some respects superior to the inhabitants of other parts, and are decidedly less superstitious, and more moral in their conduct. Those in the ports of the north coast are somewhat more industrious than the mestizoes; but, with this solitary quality, I believe that the negroes, mulattoes, and zamboes, are no better than the other classes.

As far as I can judge from my own observation, and the opinion of those strangers most competent to speak, the Central American character is naturally simple and timid; and, unfortunately, their extreme timidity and diffidence have prevented the most respectable classes from mixing in the government, or at all interfering in politics, so that the administration of public affairs has fallen, not into the hands of the wealthy and respectable classes, but first, of needy adventurers more cunning and impudent than the rest; and afterwards, of robbers, assassins, and others, who would not hesitate at any means to attain their end. All the revolutions are made by a very few of this class, while the mass of the people submit without a murmur to what they direct, and even prefer being robbed by any desperate adventurer, to laying aside the national indolence and timidity to resist them.

The present corrupted character has evidently resulted from the brutalising influence of continued civil wars, and the infamous examples shown by the assassins, who from time to time seized the government; the members of which have almost always been the most immoral, false, and despicable of the population, and, so far from encouraging morality, or the social virtues, made it a rule to outrage them on every occasion. Whatever crime is committed, the perpetrator has only to declare himself a violent partisan of some of the factions which divide the country, to be not only protected from justice, but rewarded, and the power of tyrannising over the rest of the community put into his hands.

All the most industrious and respectable people,

and, indeed, all who have either cash or character to lose, are afraid to have any thing to do with the government; consequently, they are made the victims of all sorts of oppression, and have heavy contributions exacted from them, when one robber or assassin has collected a few rascals to attack another. The rulers are, indeed, so far from being "a terror to evil doers," and "a praise to those who do well," that they may most truly be termed a terror to those who do well, and a protection to evil doers. Under such a government, and with a people spiritless enough to submit to it, there can be little hope of any moral improvement; and except the state of Costa Rica, which under a more enlightened government has made such rapid strides in improvement, I can see no prospect of any amelioration in the character of the people, till an absolute government shall be established by some foreign power; or, perhaps, till a long course of poverty and misrule shall force even this most apathetic people to rise and exterminate the infamous characters who have pretended to govern them, and seek out the most worthy and capable to supply their place. But the past history of the country certainly leaves us rather to hope for, than expect, such a result in the present age.

While the present generation are so deplorably ignorant of the elements of education, the state of the public schools and means of instruction offers no better prospect for the future.

Two colleges (as they are called) exist in Guatemala, which, though they are by far the first establishments of the kind in Central America, are far below the most ordinary public school in England; the

only qualification required previous to entering them, being to write and read the Spanish language. The branches taught are, arithmetic, dignified with the name of mathematics, the Latin, French, and English languages, philosophy of Aristotle, and practice of medicine. No attempt is made to teach chemistry, astronomy, mechanics, or geometry; but, above all, the ignorance of geography among the best informed classes is most ridiculous. A young man, about five-and-twenty, of one of the richest and proudest families of Guatemala, and of the self-called nobles, inquired of me whether I was a native of London, or England; and, upon my stating that I was a native of neither, though of Great Britain, he again inquired, if Great Britain was not a province of London, or England. Another asked me if I was English of England, or English of France; and seeing that I smiled, he added, then you may be an English North American.

I have often been asked whether Guatemala, or England, contained the larger population; but the most amusing definition was propounded by a large landed proprietor in the state of Guatemala, who has no small opinion of his learning; namely, that there were only two real nations in the Old World — England and Spain, and that the rest were all "*guanacos;*" a name applied to the natives of the smaller states by those of Guatemala, apparently brought down from the time of the Spanish government, when that province was the residence of the captain-general, and meaning ignorance and rusticity.

Though, according to law, education is entirely free, no person except a Roman Catholic could ven-

ture to set up a school, as he would be certain to be forced to abandon it by the priests, as was exemplified in the case of Mr. Crow.

Some of the teachers in Guatemala, not employed in the Universities, are said to be men of good education, but not accustomed to the best method of instruction; and, as they can hardly make an existence by teaching, they generally trade, farm, or employ themselves in some other way, teaching only at their leisure hours; but the acquirements of teachers in the smaller towns are very slender indeed. The steward of a small Chilian vessel, a stupid-looking mestizo, offered himself to me as servant in the port of the Union in November, 1844, when I told him I did not require his services; but meeting him a few days afterwards, he told me that he had been appointed schoolmaster of the town, with a salary of sixteen dollars a month; which occupation he evidently thought much inferior to five dollars a month, with board and lodging, as a servant.

Some few Central Americans who have visited England have perfectly learned the English language; and they appear to have the same quickness in learning possessed by the West Indian Creoles, and a great readiness in comprehending any subtle theory or argument, which attaches to most people not well brought up from childhood, and having only a smattering of some branches of education.

The consequence is, that all the exertions of the priests have only served to limit general knowledge; while all the young people above the labouring classes have, in spite of them, imbibed infidel opinions, and make no hesitation in calling the Chris-

tian revelation a ridiculous fable, and the priests, comedians and cheats. They speak of them in a much more disrespectful manner than any Protestant would think of doing, while, at the same time, they comply with the unmeaning Romish ceremonies, and kneel and cross themselves before the figures of their saints.

Though the entire liberty of religious worship, both private and public, was guaranteed by the federal constitution of Central America, acts have been since passed by the states of Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica, in reference to this and some other of the federal laws, declaring that parties differing from the Church of Rome are only at liberty to exercise their religion in private. Indeed, such religious liberty could never in reality exist, whatever the laws might be on the subject, as the priests, who have the entire control over the greater part of the lower orders, would be certain to excite them to assassinate any person who should attempt to expose their idolatry, and introduce a purer system of religion.

The religion of the lower classes resembles at present what is described as having existed in some parts of Europe in the thirteenth century, and consists of certain unmeaning forms, sedulously kept up by the priests, without the least attempt being made to inculcate morality, much less any part of the vital principles of Christianity.

In America, there is none of the majestic solemnity attached to the Roman Catholic religion, which is found in some of the countries of continental Europe.

Innumerable images of all the saints of the Romish calendar are to be seen in all the churches, and to one or other of these figures the lower classes always address their prayers; never, as they have often admitted to me, supplicating the Supreme Being, or the Mediator of the Christian covenant. Rich offerings are often made to these saints, or, more properly, to the priests who take care of them (and in their sermons extol their virtues in the most ridiculous and indecent manner, in order to extract offerings from the people), by persons who are sick, in order to purchase a cure; and sometimes, though not nearly so often, by those who have committed some crime, to purchase absolution. These saints are, on particular days, paraded about the streets in procession; and, as often as they pass, the lower classes fall on their knees.

Many of the images have the supposed power of working miracles; but the most celebrated of all, is called Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas (our Lord of Esquipulas). It is a small image, and, as I have been informed by those who have seen it, of an ill-looking black man; but it is understood to be a representation of the Supreme Being, impiously drawn in a human figure. This image, which it is pretended, fell down from heaven, has the supposed power of healing all diseases, and granting any request which may be preferred to it; and, such is its celebrity, that the credulous people bring the sick from all parts of the republic, even a distance of 500 miles, on foot. It is said, that more than 100,000 persons annually visit it on the three festival days, appointed for that purpose, in the year; and the priest, though he has

no revenue except the offerings made to the saint, possesses by far the richest living in Central America.

The following account of one of the pretended miracles wrought by the image was given me by Don Manuel Zapata, as trustworthy a gentleman as any in Central America, and well known to all persons who have resided in the state of San Salvador. Having gone, with others, to the great annual fair, held on one of the saint's festivals, on the 6th of January 1824, and having got into the body of the church amidst an immense crowd of people, after he had waited some time, and seen some minor miracles of rather an equivocal character performed, he saw a man brought in who appeared to be a most wretched object, his legs and arms being twisted upwards, and his whole body distorted in a most horrible manner. He was placed before the image, and exclaimed in a hollow voice, — "I have come upwards of a hundred leagues to see our Lord of Esquipulas, and will never leave till he has cured me:" this he repeated several times, when suddenly he gave a spring, and appeared healed in a moment; his body became straight, his legs and arms resumed their former position, and he stood before the image a stout hale man.

Upon the completion of this most wonderful miracle, the musicians in attendance struck up a dancing tune; large sums of money were collected for the saint, and the object of the miracle, and the painters in attendance commenced painting copies of it for sale. Don Manuel told me, that though he had before had strong doubts about the authenticity

of the miracles, and every thing else pertaining to priestcraft, he could not contradict or deny what appeared, without doubt, to be a miraculous cure. The next morning he had to leave Esquipulas; and in the suburbs of the town he met a gentleman mounted on a very fine mule, with handsome Mexican saddle and trappings. Saluting each other, according to the custom of the country, they entered into conversation; the stranger told him that he had been present at the disgraceful farce of the preceding day, that he well knew the man on whom the pretended miracle had been wrought; that he was a noted robber who lived near the river Paz, and that he had wished to apprehend him as a criminal and impostor, but that the priests would not permit it, as they said that all he had done was for the glory of God, and, that to apprehend him would injure the fame of our Lord of Esquipulas.

While all the forms and ceremonies enjoined by the priests are most scrupulously and devoutly performed by the Indians, and the greater part of the humbler classes of all breeds, and the images of the saints are most devoutly worshipped, and all the ridiculous fables told regarding them fully believed, the more educated classes are almost universally sceptics; and, though the more prudent outwardly conform to the Roman Catholic ceremonies in public, they never go to church, except officially on some public occasion, or partake of any of the Catholic sacraments except baptism—marriage—and the Eucharist, when they are about to die. The first and last named are practised as a sort of charm, and the second is reckoned necessary for the sake of

public decency, when the parties are of good family: but when speaking with a stranger they have no hesitation in ridiculing the religion and ceremonies of their church.

The character of the priests in Spanish America, with very few exceptions, is grossly immoral and corrupt; nearly all publicly live in concubinage, and a great number drink and gamble. Such being their own character, they can hardly be expected to inculcate morality on others; yet their supposed sacred character makes them worshipped by the lower orders, though they are ridiculed and despised by the more educated.

After the independence, the Roman Catholic Church in Central America had no communication with the pope for many years; but five years ago, on the triumph of the servile party, an ambassador was sent to his holiness, and Don José Viteri returned bishop of San Salvador. The pope shortly afterwards appointed Dr. Francisco Garcia Palaez, coadjutor, to supply the place of the archbishop of Guatemala, who, on his expulsion by Morazan, repaired to the island of Cuba.

Doctor Francisco Garcia Palaez, formerly coadjutor, but now, by the death of the late archbishop Casaus, archbishop of Guatemala, is a native of the state, a man of narrow capacity, and badly educated; he is more discreet in his moral conduct than most of the class, but he is so exceedingly bigoted, that if he had it only in his power he would revive the darkest period of the Spanish Inquisition. Luckily this is now out of the question, and the priests in Central America have been too lately

hunted down to attempt any thing which may render them unpopular. Still he has had it in his power to persecute, and finally expel from the state, an Englishman, of the name of Crow, who was sent out by one of the Bible societies in England to the British settlement of Belize, and afterwards proceeded to Guatemala, where he set up a school, in which he was so successful that nearly all the respectable natives and foreigners sent their children to be taught by him; but though, as far as I have heard, he was a man of unexceptionable character, and strictly abstained from interfering with the religion of the country, the archbishop and priests seemed afraid that to educate the rising generation would teach them to despise their superstition, and aided by the municipal authorities, who wished to please the lower classes, by whom they are selected, they continually annoyed him in every possible manner, and sent him orders to close his school; which, relying on his privilege as a British subject, he refused to do. In the beginning of last April, however, he received a positive order immediately to quit the state; and after having in vain applied for assistance to Mr. Chatfield, the British consul-general (of whose motives in refusing it I am not aware, though of course they must have been sufficient), he was seized by a body of soldiers when coming out of the Belgian consulate, where he had taken refuge, set upon a mule, and conveyed to the port of Isabel, where he was forced to embark on board a vessel bound to the British settlement of Belize.

It is said that General Carrera was unfavourable to the act, though he permitted it to please the

priests; but it is to be hoped the British government will not permit so gross an injury to one of their subjects to be inflicted, contrary to law, by the wretched and contemptible provincial government of Guatemala without condign punishment.

Don José Viteri, the bishop of San Salvador, is a man of more talent and education than the archbishop of Guatemala; he was formerly minister to the Guatemala government; — an office for which he would appear much better fitted than for that of an ecclesiastic. He is of one of the first families in San Salvador, and having travelled in Europe, is a man of most polished manners and pleasing address; but his private character is notoriously vicious and debased, and he is one of the greatest political incendiaries and promoters of civil war in all the republic.

Much less bigotry exists in the states of San Salvador and Nicaragua, but in other respects they are, perhaps, rather worse than some of the others. The priests have never quite recovered the power they had before the time of Morazan, and their influence seems still to be on the decline, except in the states of Guatemala and Costa Rica, where it is at present supported by the government for party purposes. Probably this is, after all, the least of two evils; for until the people are educated, and taught a purer religion, the overthrow of the Roman Catholic church would only be depriving them of the little remaining moral restraint which, though based on so degrading a superstition, still forms some check to the lower classes. I do not mean to compare the degraded and childish superstition which at present exists in Central Ame-

rica, with the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, Germany, or even Italy, which probably differs much less from the purest reformed church, than that of Central America does from them; but I have no hesitation in saying that the religion of China, Birmah, Turkey, or Persia, is infinitely superior to that which at present exists in Spanish America; and I have no doubt that such a degrading superstition is one main cause of the ignorance, immorality, and indolence, which pervades so large a proportion of the population of all the American countries formerly belonging to the Spanish crown.

The admirable, though often disputed maxim of Pope,—

"That which is best administered is best,"

certainly admits of no dispute when applied to laws, and is most strongly exemplified in all the Spanish American states, whose laws are generally founded upon the modern Spanish code, one of the most excellent that can be framed by human intellect, consisting of the best parts of old Spanish, English, and French jurisprudence, but entirely free from the cumbrous rubbish of ancient statutes still retained in more enlightened countries.

With so excellent a base, and some slight alterations, suggested by experience and local circumstances, it might be supposed that the laws of Central America would be as nearly perfect as human fallibility would admit; and I feel convinced that no person can read the enactments throughout, without admiring their wisdom, simplicity, completeness, and adaptation to all classes and circumstances. The

peculiar difference between laws founded upon the British and Spanish codes is, that, while in the former lawsuits are managed by lawyers, according to certain unintelligible forms, and evidence is loosely taken, verbally, from the persons tendering it; in the latter, the lawyer never makes his appearance, though parties may take his advice when they think proper. Everything is also done in writing, to which all verbal testimony must be reduced and sworn to in the presence of the judge trying the case, before it can be received in evidence. Another peculiarity, which would not be approved of by English lawyers, is, that a civil action is always commenced by examining the defendant upon his oath; and, if he then admits the claim, further proof is unnecessary. Unfortunately, though perjury is by law punishable by the loss of the right hand, it is actually never punished in any part of Spanish America, and is not considered as any crime, or even disgrace; so that, when the defendant admits any important legal points against himself, it is more from want of shrewdness than from fear of committing perjury.

The alcalde, who is the magistrate elected by the people, takes cognisance of petty claims and offences; such as, labourers who have received advances on account of work which they have not performed as stipulated, and petty disputes between the working people, which he generally disposes of in a summary manner as he thinks just, but without any regard whatever to law. In small towns he is the only magistrate, and his decisions are, I believe, never disputed, though by law an appeal may be made to

the corregidor, whose office is similar to that of a head police magistrate, and, like the latter, he is appointed by government.

The primary civil tribunal in Guatemala, where commercial disputes are generally decided, is the Consolado, the judges of which are composed of the principal shopkeepers (for want of wholesale merchants). Two merchants selected by lot, and the president, a lawyer, form a tribunal, by which the disputes are tried. All witnesses are examined by this tribunal, and their evidence reduced to writing by a clerk in attendance. The plaintiff and defendant may, when not summoned for examination, or after their statement has been taken, appear, either personally or by a friend, but, as already observed, no lawyer is allowed to be present.

The statements of both parties being carefully made out in writing, are tied together and sealed, and, as soon as the defendant has replied to all the assertions of the plaintiff, and all the witnesses, if any, have been examined, and their evidence reduced to writing and commented on by both parties, and replied to by both as fully and as often as they think proper, the two merchants give their decision (generally reserving any legal points for settlement by the civil judge); and by this the parties must abide, unless they prefer appealing to the supreme court, in which case the dispute is gone over anew, without any reference to the previous decision; and the judge gives his decree in writing at great length, stating fully the grounds, both legal and equitable, on which it is founded. Either party can, however,

object to the grounds of the award upon legal or equitable reasons; and, upon their paying a small fine, and giving security for the costs, the case will be gone over again: and finally, according to the authority of Central America, either party may appeal to the House of Representatives, who will appoint a committee of lawyers to examine the grounds of the award, and, if any of them are decided to be bad, order a new trial.

Disputes which have nothing to do with commerce are, in the first instance, decided by the petty judge of the district where they occur (*jues de la primera instancia*), an appeal lying to the superior tribunals as in commercial disputes; and as the tribunal of the Consolado only exists in the state of Guatemala, the district judge must first be applied to in all cases in the other states.

As might be anticipated in a country where all classes are demoralised, the fountain of justice is also corrupted, and it is never attempted to be denied, that a few gold ounces are the most convincing arguments that can be offered to a judge. As might also be expected, many of the district judges are not only deplorably ignorant of law, but destitute of the most ordinary education. The judge of the Consolado in Amatitlan (a mulatto cochineal grower), who can just sign his name, issued a summons intended for me on account of a petty demand, but as the name contained in the document did not in the least resemble mine, I paid no attention to two orders to attend; and some days afterwards, when, luckily, I was not at home, a troop of soldiers were

sent to fetch me. On my return, I sent to ask the judge what he meant by such a proceeding (as I had previously notified to him that the summons to attend was not in my name), and he at once admitted that he knew I was not properly cited, but added, that this made no difference, as I knew the order was intended for me. The civil judge, however, happened to be a lawyer, and advised the dispenser of cochineal and mercantile law to be a little more cautious in his proceedings with British subjects.

A late supreme judge of Guatemala, who had some mercantile transactions with the principal foreign mercantile house there, by way of security, made over to them the estates of a person for whom he pretended to be legal agent, producing letters and powers of attorney authorising him to do so. Some time afterwards the judge took himself off, and the owner of the transferred estates appearing to claim them, actually produced a letter from the judge stating that all the documents were forged. This judge had been considered one of the best and most active ever known in Guatemala; but, of course, a man who could act in such a manner would never hesitate to sell justice to the highest bidder.

I believe that lawsuits with government are in all countries bad cases, and that a prudent man will generally prefer submitting to injustice to going to law; but in Central America, it would not only be utter madness to think of such a thing, but no person will attempt to bring an action against any officer in the employ of government, or even his friends or near relations; and it is customary for parties fancy-

ing themselves aggrieved by the decisions of the judges, to represent their case to the head officer of government, who, if he is convinced by the arguments, or some more tangible process, sends a positive order to the court to reverse its decisions. General Carrera, the present president of the state of Guatemala, continually interferes in this manner, and has, occasionally, when the judges gave a decision contrary to his wishes, sent for them to his house, and after calling them pigs, dogs, jackasses, and other polite terms, ordered them instantly to reverse their decision. Were the judges men of honour, integrity, or independence, it is needless to say that they would not serve under such a government; but such men would not be acceptable to a government which daily violates all semblance of law and justice.

One of the principal stipulations of the Central American constitution is, that no government can demand a forced loan on any pretence, or impose any duties or taxes not authorised by the representatives of the people; but so little notice is taken of this law, so necessary in a free country, that scarcely a year passes in any of the states, except Costa Rica, without the government demanding one or more forced loans. A list of the traders and other people in the state supposed to possess property having been made out, they are assessed according to the fancy of government, the amount demanded from each being taken at the point of the bayonet.

During the government of Malespein in San Salvador, many people were quite unable to pay the

amount at which they were assessed, when a most novel piece of tyranny was had recourse to. Two of their neighbours, friendly to government, and supposed to possess property, were called in to value the effects of the person unable to pay, and forced to take the goods at their own valuation, handing over the amount to government. It may be supposed that these appraisers took good care not to put too high a value on the property: hence, parties unable at once to meet the illegal demands of government, were certain of being entirely ruined, while others got their property for a small fraction of its value.

Criminal justice is, also, nominally administered according to the Spanish code; but only two crimes (murder and theft) are ever actually punished, all the others enumerated in modern codes, such as rape, perjury, forgery, &c., being considered venial, and currently talked of as no disgrace to the parties convicted of them.

According to the Spanish law, no crime can be punished unless there be sufficient personal evidence of its committal, and where the accused can command a few dollars, this evidence is never sufficient, not even in the case of murder, unless the individual killed be a friend of some officer of government, or have relations who will pay more than the accused. Intoxication is taken as a sufficient excuse for the commission of murder or any other crime; hence the only crimes ever punished are murder committed by the lower classes, when they cannot plead intoxication, and petty larceny,—the former by shooting,

and the latter, by a certain term of labour on the public works.

Political offences are the ones which meet a certain and immediate punishment, the parties supposed to be guilty being generally seized and shot, without any pretence of trial, upon the information of some accomplice or enemy, and often, of course, most unjustly. For when an insurrection takes place, whether successful or not, the lives of the losing party are supposed to lie, justly, at the disposal of the conquerors. If the government proves strongest and maintains itself, it shoots as many of the people as it thinks proper; if it is overthrown, the new government shoots as many of the members of the old and its adherents as suits their pleasure. This, as was remarked to me by the wife of General Sachet (one of the best informed and most respectable women I have seen in Central America), was all right and proper. But any one who has an enemy takes the occasion to call on the general of the victorious party, and after complimenting him upon his success, and professing devotedness to his interest, proceeds to accuse the person against whom he has a spite, of having spoken against him, or of being an adherent of the opposite party, or of some other political offence, perhaps, of really a very trifling nature; and, the result is, that the person so accused is often seized, and put to death without examination or even knowing what he is accused of, though he is, perhaps, all the while actually friendly to the dominant faction. There is, of course, no means of punishing those assassinations, except by

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others of a similar nature when the friends of the murdered party are in the ascendancy; hence disputes are embittered to the utmost, and revenge is from time to time treasured up, and when wreaked at length, only leaves a new score to be settled on the next convenient opportunity.

THE END.

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